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LITTLE JOURNEYS TO PARNASSUS

Not to know me argues yourselves unknown,  
The lowest of your throng.

—MILTON, *Paradise Lost*, Bk. iv., 1.830.

*Little*  
JOURNEYS TO PARNASSUS

*By*  
THOMAS SPEED MOSBY



*Laudator temporis acti*

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## INTRODUCTION.

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No volume with which the author is acquainted has heretofore attempted to present in abbreviated form a critical survey, however imperfect, of the classical periods of the seven great literatures of the world, and he is persuaded that no such work exists. The need of such a work is apparent to all who have sought to gain, in a brief period of time, even a slight acquaintance with many of the literatures mentioned. This desideratum the present volume, it is hoped, may in some measure supply. It will be noted, moreover, that the grouping of the subjects herein treated will facilitate comparison and contrast, and thus enable the student to arrive at a more accurate knowledge of the relative merits of an author than he might have obtained from an entire volume on a single subject.

In every instance the attempt has been made to portray the character faithfully and intimately, however brief the sketch. Thus we say of Horace that he "has been the loved companion of literary men for twenty centuries. In the philosophy of amicability he stands without a peer. His striking features are humanness and modernity. Always he is the speaking friend at elbow, varying quip and jest with solemn admonition," etc. With all deference to the opinions of others, it is respectfully submitted that a volume of critical essays upon the *Ars Poetica* and the *Odes* could scarcely afford a more accurate view of Horace. Wherever it has been thought necessary or advisable the better to elucidate the subject, the world's greatest authorities in literary criticism have been quoted. Conspicuous instances are the essays on Byron and Goethe. Indeed, it is believed there is no other work of the kind so rich in quotations of that sort. The reader will pardon, let it be hoped, any disposition to exaggerate the value of this feature of the work. To the author it has appeared to be of the very highest importance.

This work is not primarily designed for use as a textbook in the schools. But for the purposes of supplemental reading,

and as a work of reference, it should be found invaluable as an aid to students and literary workers. For these reasons it has been officially adopted for the Pupils' Reading Circle in the public schools of the State of Missouri. For these purposes the general index at the end of this volume will add materially to its value.

In the seventy essays herewith submitted it has been necessary to omit much of interest and value. But if the author has succeeded in his purpose, the reader will delve more deeply into the rich mines of which these fragments are but specimen ores. In a time so largely given to material pursuits it may profit us to remember that some old things are true. Times change, but the eternal verities abide. There are truths which age cannot crumble, beauties which time cannot efface. The good and true remain. Nothing else really matters. Out of the chrysalis of things that are dead new beauties bloom, in perpetual kinship with the glory and the dream we thought no more. The rainbow fades, but its colors reappear in a myriad of living forms, in an area bounded only by the limits of the sun.

It was Samuel Johnson who said: "That man is little to be envied whose patriotism would not gain force upon the plain of Marathon or whose piety would not grow warmer among the ruins of Iona." Nor is he more to be envied whose mind cannot draw new light from the olden, golden truths that loom like distant stars in the horizon of the soul.

Hence these little journeys to the mount of inspiration. For those whose busy days will not permit a more extensive acquaintance with the great minds of the past the following essays may serve at least to beguile the tedium of a leisure hour; or perhaps as an introduction, faintly, but none the less faithfully, it is hoped, shadowing forth the outlines of those beauties which were not born to die, and which have in every age enriched the soul of man.

THOS. SPEED MOSBY.

Jefferson City, Missouri, July 28, 1921.

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PART ONE

GREAT ROMAN AUTHORS



- I. LIVY.
- II. HORACE.
- III. VIRGIL.
- IV. LUCAN.
- V. OVID.
- VI. LUCRETIUS.
- VII. PLAUTUS.
- VIII. MARCUS AURELIUS.
- IX. SALLUST.
- X. QUINTILIAN.

Oh Rome! my country! city of the soul!  
The orphans of the heart must turn to thee,  
Lone mother of dead empires.

—BYRON, "Childe Harold," Canto iv. St. 78.

## I.

### LIVY.

In the monastery of Justina (anciently the temple of Juno) at Rome, in the year 1413, there was discovered a monument bearing the following inscription: "The bones of Titus Livius, of Padua, a man worthy to be approved of all mankind; by whose almost invincible pen the acts and exploits of the Romans were written."

Never was epitaph more true, and never was funereal inscription more generally or justly accepted as truth throughout all subsequent history.

Born fifty-eight years before the Christian era, Livy moved amidst the literary glamour and imperial blazonry of that Augustan Age of which he was himself an ornament so splendid and a type so pure. The personal friend of one emperor and the preceptor of another, history with one voice acclaims him among the greatest of the Romans. Tacitus and the younger Pliny bear witness to the exalted esteem in which he was held.

Livy was the friend of Augustus Caesar, who employed him as tutor of his grandson Claudius, who later became emperor. But there is no record of any attempt upon the part of Livy to reap a financial profit from his high connections. All his spare time was employed in writing his great history of Rome, a work to which he had dedicated his life, and from which he never swerved until his vast labors were completed.

Livy's history of Rome comprised one hundred and forty-two books. He did not long survive the completion of his gigantic task, and died at the age of seventy-five years.

But thirty-five of the one hundred and forty-two books of Livy have come down to us. "What a school of public and private virtue had been opened to us at the resurrection of learning," exclaims Lord Bolingbroke, "if the later historians of the Roman Commonwealth and the first of the succeeding monarchy, had

come down to us entire. The few that are come down, though broken and imperfect, compose the best body of history we have; nay, the only body of ancient history which deserves to be an object of study. Appian, Dion Cassius, nay, even Plutarch included, make us but poor amends for what is lost of Livy."

It has been most truly remarked of the clear, elegant and lucid style of Livy, that he could be labored without affectation; diffusive without tediousness; and argumentative without pedantry. And if history is indeed philosophy teaching by examples, we lose none of its moral values in the fervent glow of Livy's matchless periods. In proof of this we need but a single specimen of his lofty style. Let us take it from the first book of his history:

"To the following considerations I wish every one seriously and earnestly to attend; by what kind of men, and by what sort of conduct, in peace and war, the empire has been both acquired and extended; then, as discipline gradually declined, let him follow in his thought the structure of ancient morals, at first, as it were, leaning aside, then sinking farther and farther, then beginning to fall precipitate, until he arrives at the present times, when our vices have attained to such a height of enormity that we can no longer endure either the burden of them or the sharpness of the necessary remedies. This is the great advantage to be derived from the study of history; indeed the only one which can make it answer any profitable and salutary purpose; for, being abundantly furnished with clear and distinct examples of every kind of conduct, we may select for ourselves, and for the state to which we belong, such as are worthy of imitation; and carefully noting such as, being dishonorable in their principles are equally so in their effects, learn to avoid them."

When we accept history in the sense expressed by this great Roman, we may more fully grasp the truth of Bacon's observation that "histories make men wise;" and the more we study the comparatively small portion of Livy that has been transmitted to our times, the more we feel inclined to lament, with Bolingbroke, the loss of the greater portion. Livy never strains a point to make an epigram; but in the course of his works we find him, in the

heat of composition, throwing off, like sparks from an anvil, such glowing thoughts as these:

"Men are seldom blessed with good sense and good fortune at the same time."

"What is honorable is also safest."

"No wickedness has any ground of reason."

"Treachery, though at first very cautious, in the end betrays itself."

"Prosperity engenders sloth."

"Experience is the teacher of fools."

"As soon as woman begins to be ashamed of what she ought not, she will not be ashamed of what she ought."

## II.

### HORACE.

At the little town of Venusia, in the year 63 B. C., was born Quintus Horatius Flaccus, the greatest lyrical poet of Rome. While finishing his education at Athens, Horace made the acquaintance of Brutus, then on his march to Macedonia, following the assassination of Julius Caesar. The poet was then only in his twenty-third year, but was made a staff officer in the army of Brutus, whose fortunes he followed to the ill-starred field of Philippi. Returning to Italy only to find his estates confiscated, he betook himself to the imperial city, and in that world-metropolis his literary genius soon gained the acquaintance and friendship of the poet Virgil, who in turn presented him to Maecenas, the court politician and patron of letters, who thereafter became the poet's life-long friend. Through Maecenas, Horace met the emperor, Augustus, with whom, for the remainder of his life, he lived upon terms of closest intimacy.

Upon one occasion the emperor upbraided his poetic friend for having never mentioned him in his odes and epistles. "I am angry with you," he wrote to Horace, "because you do not especially choose me to converse with in the principal part of your writings of this nature. Do you fear lest the appearance of my intimacy should injure you with posterity?" To this genial and complimentary rebuke Horace made fitting response in the first epistle of his second book.

Augustus Caesar was quite fond of both Horace and Virgil, and often, it is related, while sitting at his meals, with Virgil at his right hand and Horace at his left, the emperor made a jest of Virgil's shortness of breath and Horace's watery eyes by observing that he sat between sighs and tears.

Philip Francis has summarized the views of the critics of all ages, in the statement that Horace "has united in his lyric poetry the enthusiasm of Pindar, the majesty of Alcaeus, the tenderness of Sappho and the charming levities of Anacreon." But he is

neither so gross as Anacreon nor so sensual as Sappho. Likewise it may be said that he is bold without blustering, and majestic without austerity. His strength is in his unfailing delicacy of poise, his limpid utterance, his translucent phrase, his wholesome sanity, his bewitching simplicity and ease. In the precise and chiselled elegance of his diction the excellence of his work is surpassed by none, and is approximated by no modern lyric bard in our language with the possible exception of Thomas Gray, while the charming urbanity and flowing sweetness of his mild ironic humor find no modern counterpart save in the essays of Joseph Addison. A great author, in relation to his readers, may be viewed as master, mentor or companion. Horace has been the loved companion of educated men for twenty centuries. In the philosophy of amicability he stands without a peer. His striking features are humanness and modernity. Always he is the speaking friend at elbow, varying quip and jest with solemn admonition, and, even when sad, smiling through his tears, helping and hoping, but never moping, along the byways of life.

Do you remember his simple prayer?

"Son of Latona, grant me a sound mind in a sound body, that I may enjoy what I possess, and not pass a dishonored old age without the innocent pleasures of music!"

Much of his philosophy, we cannot doubt, he drew from the simple life of his Sabine farm, the gift of his friend Maecenas. Here, in his sylvan retreat, secure from the tumult of the busy capital, he learned to worship the "golden mean." Hear him:

"The man who loves the golden mean is safe from the misery of a wretched hovel, and, moderate in his desires, cares not for a luxurious palace, the subject of envy. The tall pine bends oftener to the rude blast; lofty towers fall with a heavier crash, and the lightnings strike more frequently the tops of the mountains. A well-balanced mind hopes for a change when the world frowns, and fears its approach when it smiles. It is the same divine being that brings back and sends away the gloom of winter. Though sorrow may brood over thee just now, a change may ere long await thee. At times Apollo tunes his silent lyre, and is not

always bending his bow. Be of good cheer and firm in the hour of adversity, and when a more favorable gale is blowing, thou wilt do wisely to be furling thy swelling sail." Again:

"The man caught by a storm in the wide Aegean, when the moon is hid by dark clouds, and no star shines to guide him certainly on his way, prays for ease: the Thracian, fierce in battle, prays for ease: the quivered Parthians pray for ease— a blessing not to be bought by gems, purple, nor gold. Ease is not venal; for it is not treasures, nor yet the enjoyment of high power, that can still the uneasy tumults of the soul, and drive away the cares that hover round the fretted ceilings of the great."

Like other great minds of the time, Horace saw through the tinsel and glitter of Rome in her most glorious day the venality that was to destroy her. "What are laws?" he asks; "vain without public virtues to enforce them."

"Cease to admire the smoke, riches and din of Rome!" he exclaims.

"The age of our parents," he writes, "worse than that of our grandsires, has brought us forth more impious still, and we shall produce more vicious progeny."

Horace is peculiarly the poet of friendship. Only a true friend could say this: "He who backbites an absent friend, who does not defend him when he is attacked, who seeks eagerly to raise the senseless laugh and acquire the fame of wit, who can invent an imaginary romance, who cannot keep a friend's secret; that man is a scoundrel! Mark him, Roman, and avoid him." Many are his tributes to his friends. To him they were an indispensable condition of life. Nor did he long survive those who were dearest to his heart. When Virgil and Maecenas died he followed them within a few weeks, passing away at the age of fifty-seven; having, as he said of his own work, "raised a monument more lasting than brazen statues, and higher than the royal pyramids, a monument which shall not be destroyed by the wasting rain, the fury of the north wind, by a countless series of years or the flight of ages."



### III.

#### VIRGIL.

P. Virgilius Maro, born seventy years before the Christian era, was, after Homer, the greatest epic poet of antiquity. He died September 22, B. C. 19, in the fifty-second year of his age.

Virgil, the farmer poet, was not only a man of finished education, but was deeply learned in agriculture. Like Horace, his contemporary and friend, his estates were confiscated because of his early opposition to the cause of Augustus Caesar, and, like Horace, he received both pardon and patronage from the emperor. Virgil's first public employment was in connection with the royal stables, because of his skill in the cure of diseases among horses. However, his literary genius did not remain long inactive, and he soon began the composition of his *Eclogues*, which created a literary sensation in Rome. It is in this work that the well-known phrase occurs, "Love conquers all things."

So great was the poet's popularity following this publication that, when some of his verses were quoted on the stage, and Virgil happened to be present, the entire audience rose, thus according to him an honor which Roman audiences gave to none but Caesar.

The advice of Maecenas and the astounding success of his pastoral poems (a field which had not been theretofore attempted by any of the Roman poets) led him to next undertake the "*Georgics*," an agricultural poem which defies imitation. The first book of the "*Georgics*" deals with soil management, the second with tree-culture, the third with live-stock and the fourth with bee-keeping. This is conceded to be the most finished poem in the Latin language. In the opinion of Addison it is the most finished poem in existence, every detail being subjected to the most exquisite polish, and refined and embellished to the last degree. "The commonest precepts of farming," in the language of one critic, "are delivered with an elegance which could scarcely be attained by a poet who should endeavor to clothe in verse the sublimest max-

ims of philosophy." The famous motto "Labor omnia vincit—Labor conquers all"—is taken from this poem.

Virgil was in his forty-fifth year when he completed the *Georgics*. He now began the "*Aeneid*," his last and greatest work, which was to occupy the remainder of his days; an epic poem portraying the wanderings of Aeneas, bringing Homer's *Illiad* down to Roman times, and tracing the Roman lineage to the Trojans; an achievement highly flattering to imperial Rome, and intensely pleasing to the Roman populace. In this great poem Virgil brought the hexameter verse, "the stateliest measure ever molded by the lips of man," to its utmost perfection. The majesty and force of Virgil's swinging line have echoed down the ages, and will reverberate till time shall be no more. The martial tread, the onward sweep, the epic grandeur of the work, are foreshadowed in the very first sentence:

"Arms and the man I sing, who, forced by Fate,  
And haughty Juno's unrelenting hate,  
Expelled and exiled, left the Trojan shore."

But, with all its wondrous power, with all its beauty and its force, the *Aeneid* was not perfect, and none knew it so well as Virgil. His keenly sensitive taste was only too conscious of the defects of the piece. He was subjecting the work to a most critical revision when death ended his labors. Deeply sensible of its imperfections, his last request was that the *Aeneid* be destroyed; but his will was thwarted by the emperor Augustus.

Shortly before his death Virgil met the emperor at Athens. Augustus was returning from his Syrian conquests. He had vanquished his domestic enemies, and was lord of the known world. At this time he was considering the restoration of the Roman republic. Agrippa favored the idea; but Maecenas was for the empire. The decision, one of the most momentous in human history, was left to the poet. He declared for the empire, and Augustus followed his advice.

Virgil, though a deep scholar, was unpretentious in his manner. He dressed and looked like a farmer. He was modest to the point of timidity. He shunned publicity, and was visibly

embarrassed by praise. Although the habit of mutual attack and recrimination was common enough among Roman writers of the time, they appear to have been unanimous in their esteem for Virgil, and his rise to fame was attended by very little of the jealousy that is frequently engendered upon such occasions. He was never in love and was never married. His private life was as beautiful and chaste as the lines he wrote. But he does not, in any of his poems, depict the character of one good woman.

In one particular the fame of Virgil will forever remain unique among the world's great poets. A superstitious reverence has encircled his name. For hundreds of years he was regarded as a kind of supernatural being, endowed with magic power and wisdom. There was long prevalent a tradition that his mother was a virgin. For centuries there was a custom of "telling one's fortune" by opening the "Aeneid" and noting the first line to meet the eye. In the middle ages it was attempted to be shown, from the Eclogues, that Virgil predicted the coming of Christ. In ancient times pilgrimages were made to his tomb, and his image was set up in the heathen temples of Rome. In consideration of all which one can only say with Boswell,

"Was ever poet so trusted before!"

#### IV. LUCAN.

After Homer and Virgil, the next great epic poet of ancient times is Lucan. This is the opinion of no less distinguished a critic than Dr. Hugh Blair, the prince of English rhetoricians. The same authority assures us, moreover, that Lucan was the most philosophical and the most public-spirited poet of all antiquity. These opinions, it is believed, fairly reflect the judgment of modern criticism, notwithstanding the particular faults pointed out by the German savant Dr. Niebuhr, by Dr. Blair, and others.

Lucan (Marcus Annaeus Lucanus), the principal Roman poet of the so-called "Silver Age," was born in Spain, 38 A. D., where his father had amassed a fortune as a farmer of the Roman revenues. The elder Lucan was a younger brother of Seneca, the philosopher. The poet in his infancy was brought to Rome, where he became a school-mate of Persius, and a friend of Emperor Nero. Brought up in an atmosphere of culture, surrounded by the opportunities of boundless wealth and the refinements of social position, put forth by genius and upheld by power, Lucan entered with zest and promise upon the brilliant career which the Roman capital offered to men of his type and talent. A favorite of the emperor, he advanced quickly in the public service. He became quaestor and augur. A man of popular manners and a poet of great power, he rose rapidly in the public esteem. His public recitations and declamations met with increasingly great applause. His fame aroused the envy of Nero, and the emperor's vindictive jealousy soon made his condition so intolerable that he joined in a plot against the tyrant's life. He was discovered, and ordered to his death, at the age of twenty-seven, after vainly seeking to exculpate himself by the infamy of a cowardly confession, implicating his mother in the plot.

Strange it was, but true, that Lucan, child of luxury and habitue of the court of Nero, should become a lover of liberty and a champion of democracy. Yet such he was.

The "Pharsalia," a poem in ten books, is the only work of his now extant. That work is an epic of democracy, and will forever remain a part of the well remembered literature of the world. It narrates in epic form the civil wars of Pompey and Caesar, and recounts the overthrow of Roman liberty. It was the hostility to Caesarism displayed in this book which, in all probability, first drew forth the ire of Nero. The poem has been a favorite with the lovers of political freedom in all succeeding ages. It was especially popular with the republicans of Europe during the "Age of Revolutions." Some of the speeches of Cato, particularly, in this poem, for moral sublimity are unsurpassed in the annals of antiquity.

Lucan lacks tenderness and is deficient in elegance and purity of style, when compared with Virgil; nor is the epic structure of his work to be compared with that great master; but the stoic philosophy that breathes through the poem, the nobility of sentiment, and the glowing fires of freedom that gleam throughout the piece will hold its fame secure. Some of his epigrams are most striking, as when he says, in book V, "Those whom guilt stains it equals;" or, in book VII, "Neither side is guiltless if its adversary is appointed judge." His saying that "The chieftains contend only for their places of burial" suggests the line of Gray:

"The paths of glory lead but to the grave."

Another of his famous aphorisms is this: "He who rules will ever be impatient of a partner." His keen insight into the origin of popular upheavals may be shown by a single line: "For it is famine alone that confers freedom on cities; a starving populace knows no fear." And likewise, in book I, where he says: "He who refuses what is just, gives up everything to him who is armed."

## V.

### OVID.

One of the great poets of the time of Augustus was Ovid (Publius Ovidius Naso) who lived contemporaneously with Livy, Horace and Virgil. He was born B. C. 43, and died A. D. 18.

Ovid was of an ancient equestrian family, and like other young Roman nobles of the time he finished his education at Athens. He was trained for the bar, but the pursuits of literature early engrossed his attention, and he is not known to have practiced law. Unlike his great contemporaries in literature, he led a profligate life. He was divorced twice and married three times before his thirtieth year. At one time he numbered the Emperor Augustus among his personal friends; but, because of his licentious practices he was banished from Rome in the fiftieth year of his age, in the same year that Horace died. The seat of his exile was the little town of Tomi near the mouth of the Danube, on the Black sea, where he spent the remaining ten years of his life. He appears to have so conducted himself as to win the sincere love of the people of Tomi.

A number of beautiful poems were written during the period of his exile (among them the *Epistolae Ex Ponto* and the *Tristium*) which generally bewail his banishment and entreat the mercies of Augustus, but to all such appeals the emperor remained obdurate. The precise reason for the poet's exile may never be known. The cause specified was the publication of the "*Ars Amatoria*;" but this was merely a specious pretext, because the poem complained of had been published ten years before and had been in general circulation ever since. Historians have therefore indulged the plausible conjecture that Augustus took personal offense at some of the licentious acts of the poet; although many of the love poems of Ovid were by no means calculated to improve the moral status of a none too decorous public.

The poet seems to have realized his own moral instability.

He was weak, and he paid the price. How truly he exclaimed, in the greatest of his poems:

"I see the right, and I approve it, too,  
Condemn the wrong, and yet the wrong pursue."

And again, in the same poem:

"Ill habits gather by unseen degrees,  
As brooks make rivers, rivers run to seas."

From *Tomi* he wrote: "An evil life is a kind of death." Well did Ovid know it! And none knew better than he the beginnings of evil. "Resist beginnings," he urges; "it is too late to employ medicine when the evil has grown strong by inveterate habit." He was of a kindly and considerate nature. Most truly did he say: "I have lampooned no one in satirical verse, nor do my poems hold up any one to ridicule." He was, indeed, an enemy to none but himself.

Not all of Ovid's work has come down to us. "*Medea*," a tragedy which appears to have been very popular, is wholly lost. Other works have survived in whole or in part. Among the complete works he has left us is his greatest, the "*Metamorphoses*." This poem, in fifteen books, was one of his later works. It is a literary masterpiece, well worthy of the golden age of Roman literature. The poet appears to have been fully conscious of its merit; and, like Virgil and Horace upon similar occasions, he does not hesitate to say so. At the close of the fifteenth book he exclaims: "And now I have finished a work which neither the wrath of Jove, nor fire, nor steel, nor all-consuming time can destroy. Welcome the day which can destroy only my physical man in ending my uncertain life! In my better part I shall be raised to immortality above the lofty stars, and my name shall never die."

Ovid was an early favorite in English literature. Christopher Marlowe translated the "*Amores*." The "*Ars Amatoria*" was done into English verse by Congreve and Dryden. Both Dryden and Addison translated the "*Metamorphoses*." The critics are all agreed that much of Ovid was known to Shakespeare. There are allusions to Ovid in "*Much Ado About Nothing*," II:7; "*As You Like It*," III:3; "*Taming of the Shrew*," i:1; *Ib.* iii:1; "*Titus*

Andronicus," iv:1; "Love's Labor's Lost," iv:2; "A Midsummer Night's Dream," "The Tempest," iv:7; and "Venus and Adonis." Shakespeare was certainly familiar with Golding's translation of the "Metamorphoses," printed in 1567. Old father Chaucer, too was familiar with the Roman poet, as witness this opening line from a verse in the "Merchant's Tale:"

"O noble Ovide, soth sayest thou, God wot," etc.,

Ovid's pleasing style, his felicity of expression and facility of execution render his compositions most delightful to lovers of light and musical verse, while we find in him the origin of many common phrases, such as piling "Ossa on Pelion," "Agreeing to differ," "a pious fraud," "pursuits become habits," "no excellence without effort," etc. Some of his sayings became axiomatic, as:

"We covet what is guarded; the very care invokes the thief. Few love what they can have."

"We are always striving for things forbidden, and coveting those denied us."

"It is the mind that makes the man, and our vigor is in our immortal spirit."

"God gave man an upright countenance to survey the heavens, and look upward to the stars."

Ovid passed away one year before the death of Virgil.



## VI. LUCRETII.

Titus Carus Lucretius, probably the greatest didactic poet the world has ever known, was born B. C. 95, and died in the middle of the first century B. C. The exact date of his birth is conjectural, and little is known of his life, but his great work, "*De Rerum Natura*," a philosophic poem in six books, will live so long as the human voice finds utterance for the language of philosophy, and in its benign consolations the human heart finds peace.

The purpose of his poem is to vindicate the freedom of thought, and free the human mind from the dominion of superstition; a truly noble object, and magnificently essayed, even if hardly attained. In this great work, which is done in hexameter verse, the serene contemplations of the philosopher are adorned with an elegance of diction and a sweetness and harmony of numbers unsurpassed in the poetry of any language.

In philosophy, Lucretius was a disciple of Epicurus. His work has been reviewed by many of the first minds of England, Germany and France. Tennyson made him the subject of a poem. "Lucretius was an earnest seeker after truth," says one, "but it was the spirit of the typical Roman, for a definite practical end, the emancipation of mankind from the bondage of superstition. . . . The enduring interest of the poem is thus a psychological one, and is due to the unconscious self-portrayal of one of the noblest minds in history." There are traditions of the poet's madness, his death by suicide, etc., but these tales are unsupported by historic testimony.

While no translation can adequately present the statuesque dignity of his superb Latin, the following excerpts will in a measure suffice to illustrate his charm of thought and expression:

" 'Tis sweet, when the seas are roughened by violent winds, to

view on land the toils of others, not that there is pleasure in seeing others in distress, but because man is glad to know himself secure. 'Tis pleasant, too, to look, with no share of peril, on the mighty contests of war; but nothing is sweeter than to reach those calm unruffled temples, raised by the wisdom of philosophers, whence thou mayest look down on poor mistaken mortals, wandering up and down in life's devious ways, some resting their fame on genius, or priding themselves on birth, day and night toiling anxiously to rise to high fortune and sovereign power."

One cannot but recall the same thought carried out by Milton in his "Comus:"

"How charming is divine philosophy!  
Not harsh and crabb'd, as dull fools suppose;  
But musical as is Apollo's lute,  
And a perpetual feast of nectar'd sweets,  
Where no rude surfeit reigns."

Let us read further: "Why is it, O man, that thou indulgest in excessive grief? Why shed tears that thou must die? For if thy past life has been one of enjoyment, and if all thy pleasures have not passed through thy mind as through a sieve, and vanished, leaving not a rack behind, why then dost thou not, like a thankful guest, rise cheerfully from life's feast, and with a quiet mind go take thy rest."

Lucretius never ceases to exhort against the fear of death. "Wilt thou then repine," he asks, "and think it a hardship to die? thou for whom life is well nigh dead even while thou livest and enjoyest the light of day, who wearest away the greater part of thy time in sleep, who snoorest waking, and ceasest not to see visions, and bearest about with thee a mind troubled with groundless terrors, and canst not discover the cause of thy never-ending troubles, when, staggering, thou art oppressed on all sides with a multitude of cares, and reelst rudderless in unsettled thoughts."

"O misery of men!" he exclaims. "O blinded fools! in what

dark mazes, in what dangers we walk this little journey of our life!"

"How wretched are the minds of men, and how blind their understanding!"

One more sentence—and one to be remembered, too—and we take our leave of this wizard of Latinity: "Examine with judgment each opinion: if it seems true, embrace it; if false, gird up the loins of thy mind to withstand it."

## VII. PLAUTUS.

T. Maccius Plautus was born 254 B. C. and died after an active life of seventy years. He was the greatest writer of comedy the Latin language has given to the world.

The early life of Plautus was filled with hardships. At the age of thirty we find him earning a living by turning a hand-mill, grinding corn for a baker! But he was soon to furnish to the Romans bread of a different sort. In his leisure moments he composed three plays and they were instantly successful. The remainder of his life was devoted to producing for the stage. He is thought to have been the author of one hundred and thirty plays, only twenty of which have been transmitted to posterity.

The plays of Plautus are distinguished for their rapid action, their humor and their vivacity. His popularity with the ancient Romans was unbounded and his plays held undisputed possession of the Roman stage for a period of five hundred years—a longer period of popularity than the fates have vouchsafed to any other playwright in the entire course of human history. Although some of his plots were adapted from the Greek drama, his portrayal of Roman life, and of human nature, was so true as to elicit instantaneous and continuous appreciation, and his work has found imitators among the moderns in Shakespeare, Dryden, Addison, Lessing and Moliere. Both Dryden and Moliere copied his *Amphytrion*. That Plautus was known to Shakespeare is evident from the specific mention of the Roman poet, in *Hamlet*.

The writings of Plautus abound in more or less delicate but incisive thrusts at human folly, frailty and fraud. Some of his sayings have become axiomatic, and many a well known phrase finds its origin in his plays. In the fourth act of his *Trinummus* he speaks of young men "sowing their wild oats." In the same play we find (act IV): "The bell never rings of itself; unless some one handles or moves it, it is dumb." In the second act of this play we find: "He who falls in love meets a worse fate than he who leaps from a rock."

From the *Mostellaria* we glean: "You little know what a ticklish thing it is to go to law" (Act V); "To blow and swallow at the same moment is not easy to be done" (Act III); and "Things which you don't hope, happen more frequently than things which you do hope" (Act I).

"He whom the gods love dies young," is from his *Bacchides*, act iv., but is borrowed from the Greek comic poet, Menander.

"Ill gotten is ill spent" is from *Poenulus* (act IV), and in the same play (act III) we find the aphorism: "He who does not know his way to the sea should take a river for his guide."

In *Pseudolus* he excoriates, in this fashion, the gossip and the slanderer:

Act I: "Your tittle-tattlers, and those who listen to slander, by my good will should all be hanged—the former by their tongues, the latter by their ears."

Act II: "Do you never look at yourself when you abuse another?"

The same thought is pursued in his *Truculentus* (act I): "Those who twit others with their faults should look at home."

In his *Persa* the author strikes at ingratitude: "That man is worthless who knows how to receive a favor, but not how to return one" (Act V). "You love a nothing when you love an ingrate" (Act II).

In *Trinummus* (Act IV) he says: "What you lend is lost; when you ask for it back you may find a friend made an enemy by your kindness. If you begin to press him further, you have the choice of two things—either to lose your loan or to lose your friend." Shakespeare, who may have gotten here the thought, improved the expression in Polonius' advice to Laertes (*Hamlet*, Act I., Sc. III):

"Neither a borrower nor a lender be:

For loan oft loses both itself and friend,

And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry."

Plautus wrote his own epitaph, and it is worthy of reproduction as one of the truest thoughts that ever fell from his gifted pen: "Plautus has prepared himself for a life beyond the grave; the comic stage deserted weeps; laughter also, and jest and joke; and poetic and prosaic will bewail his loss together."

## VIII.

### MARCUS AURELIUS.

The pages of history record the name of but one emperor who was a gentleman as well as a king and who was likewise in all things an honest, upright and useful citizen, a profound student, a conscientious and diligent administrator of public affairs, and a man of blameless life. That man was the Roman emperor, Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, who was born A. D. 121, and died in 180.

It was Plato who wrote, in his "Ideal Republic": "Until philosophers are kings, and the princes of this world have the spirit and power of philosophy, and political greatness and wisdom meet in one, cities will never cease from ill—no, nor the human race, as I believe, and then only will our state have a possibility of life, and see the light of day. \* \* \* The truth is that the state in which the rulers are most reluctant to govern is best and most quietly governed, and the state in which they are most willing is the worst."

All these conditions were met by Marcus Aurelius, and by no other person in the entire history of the world. He loved wisdom for its own sake, and found virtue to be its own reward. He was humble in high station; a statesman who detested politics; a soldier who despised the glamour of militarism and loathed its bloody trophies; a monarch who scorned the trappings of empire, and who preserved to the last the candor of innocence, and the simplicity and gentleness of a child's heart.

But he was born to troublous times. His life was filled with action. He knew no peace, during his reign of twenty years. The empire was assaulted upon the east, the west and the north, and torn by rebellion within. Famine, pestilence, earthquakes and floods added their terrors. Marcus Aurelius had little time for the studies he loved so well; but he acted the philosophy he professed, he practiced the precepts he gave, and he surmounted every obstacle and weathered every storm. Through all these manifold disasters he moved with the sweetness of an angelic

spirit and the serene majesty of a master mind. When a trusted general revolted and was slain by subordinates, the philosopher-king lamented the fact that the Fates had denied him his fondest wish—to have freely pardoned the man who had so basely betrayed his confidence; and then he caused all the correspondence of the rebel to be destroyed, in order that others might not be implicated in the treason. He was, in very truth, most blessed of Pagans, and noblest of the Stoics. He was, at once, a king among philosophers and a philosopher among kings. Well may they decry power and riches who possess them not. But, to possess absolute power, yet temper justice with mercy; to possess unlimited wealth, and yet lead an abstemious life, active in every benevolent work—this is a test of character. How many Christian monarchs are worthy to sit beside him?

It has been remarked that his persecution of the Christians is the one blot upon his fame, the stigma of his reign. It will, we apprehend, be time enough to rebuke the Pagan emperor for this when Christians cease their persecution of one another. Just here, however, is a lesson for the present generation. Let it be voiced in the words of John Stuart Mill: "Unless anyone who approves of punishment for the promulgation of opinions, flatters himself that he is a wiser and better man than Marcus Aurelius, more deeply versed in the wisdom of his time—more elevated in his intellect above it—more earnest in his search for truth—let him abstain from that assumption of the joint multitude, which the great Antoninus made with so unfortunate a result."

Marcus Aurelius wrote but one book—his "Meditations"—and it may be doubted if even this was ever intended for publication. However, in the brief scope of this small volume we find the full fruition of the Stoical school of philosophy, "the gospel of those who do not believe in the supernatural." The fundamentals of that system of thought, long since exploded, need not be here discussed. But for all that the little volume of "Meditations" has given strength to many. It is one of the most delightful of the Roman classics, and in its pages we may readily discern the friend of man. Thus, in book II:

"And since it has fallen to my share to understand the natural beauty of a good action and the deformity of an ill one; since I am satisfied the person disobliging is of kin to me, and though we are not just of the same flesh and blood, yet our minds are nearly related, both being extracted from the Deity, I am convinced that no man can do me a real injury, because no man can force me to misbehave myself; nor can I find it in my heart to hate or be angry with one of my own nature and family. For we are all made for mutual assistance, as the feet, the hands and the eyelids; as the rows of the upper and under teeth."

Many of his maxims should be treasured in the memory of the remotest posterity. There is, for example, no sounder doctrine than this:

"He that commits a fault abroad is a trespasser at home; and he that injures his neighbor, hurts himself."

"Nothing," he says elsewhere, "is more scandalous than false friendship, and therefore, of all things, avoid it. In short, a man of integrity, sincerity and good nature can never be concealed, for his character is wrought into his countenance."

The guiding principle of his life is summed up at the end of book IX, where, speaking of a good man, he says:

"And therefore, when he does a good office, and proves serviceable to the world, he has fulfilled the end of his being, and attains his own reward."



## IX.

### SALLUST.

Caius Sallustius Crispus, "the Roman Thucydides," was a Sabine, and his birthplace was Amiternum, at the foot of the Appenines, where he first saw the light B. C. 86. He was one of the greatest of the Roman politicians, and was from the beginning a warm friend and advocate of Julius Caesar.

Sallust was elected a tribune of the people when he was thirty-two years of age. From this time forward his influence was very great, but his character was so wretched that two years later he was removed from the Senate on account of gross immorality. He was out of office for four years, when through the influence of Caesar he was restored to his position. To all the schemes of that great political and military genius Sallust was a party, and he went with Caesar to Africa in the military campaign against the party of Pompey. Having participated in that victorious campaign, which resulted in the total ruin of the Pompeian party and the suicide of Cato, Caesar made him governor of an African province. He returned a very rich man. He then devoted the remainder of his life to literature, and died B. C. 34.

The only works of Sallust that have come down to us are his two Epistles to Caesar, his history of the Jugurthine war, and his History of the Conspiracy of Catiline. Another book, in the nature of a chronicle of the events of his time, and said to have been in five volumes, has been lost.

Although the remnants of his writings that have survived are all too brief, yet he is regarded as one of the foremost of ancient historians. One of his translators, the learned Dr. Stewart, says of this extraordinary character:

"Perhaps there is no literary character that has given rise to keener sensations of aversion or partiality, than that of Sallust; no one has met with less protection from his friends, or greater persecution from his enemies. The earliest biographers, who attempted to represent him, lived in too near an age to be free

from personal prepossessions; and of the later authors the far greater number have surrendered their judgment to the dogmatical and the arrogant; they have rather listened to declamation than inquired into facts, and have thereby been disabled from deciding with candor. As to Sallust, while alive, he was exposed to the hatred of Cicero, and the envy of Livy, and vilely traduced and undervalued by the latter, when he was no longer able to answer for himself. Even down to the present day his reputation is still mangled by the heated partisans of these popular writers."

But, whatever may have been Livy's opinions of his character, there is no doubt that he emulated the style of Sallust, who was the first of the Roman historians to adopt the rhetorical method of the Greeks. Some of the passages in Sallust are of great beauty; as this, upon the mind:

"Personal beauty, great riches, strength of body, and all other things of this kind, pass away in a short time; but the noble productions of the mind, like the soul itself, are immortal. In fine, as there is a beginning, so there is an end of the advantages of person and fortune; all things that rise must set, and those that have grown must fade away; but the mind is incorruptible, eternal, the governor of the human race, directs and controls all things, overrules all things, nor is itself under the power of any."

The following sound political axiom also comes down to us from Sallust:

"It is better for a good man to be overcome by his opponents, than to conquer injustice by unlawful means." This, from a partisan of Caesar!

But, in the whole range of the classics, there is nothing finer than this, from his First Epistle to Caesar, although, mayhap, it came from one who knew too well its truth:

"There is yet," said he, "another species of reform still more important, namely, to eradicate from the mind the love of money; or, if that cannot be, to diminish as far as possible, its baneful influence. Without such a reform, what degree of prosperity can be enjoyed by a people, either at home or abroad, in private life

or in public transactions? Where riches are idolized, the manners must be corrupted, the nerves of discipline relaxed, and no propitiousness of disposition can resist the allurements. Even the mind itself must forget its powers, and, sooner or later, sink into inactivity. In the pages of history we may perceive events sufficiently demonstrative of this pernicious passion; states and kingdoms, that when depraved by wealth, have lost the mighty empires acquired during the age of poverty and virtue. Nor, if we attend to its progress, will such extent of its power create astonishment. The good man, when he sees virtue contemned, and vice, if possessed of wealth, approached with deference and honored with distinction, at first indignantly resents the preference and many a bitter reflection arises in his mind. But by degrees, the splendor of rank dazzles his fancy, and the pleasures of riches gain admission to his heart; until he sinks, at last, into the common corruption. Where riches are worshipped, honor, good faith, probity, modesty and principle of every sort, are held as light in the balance: For there is but one path which leads to virtue, and that is difficult and rugged; whereas to wealth there are a thousand, ever open, and at the choice of its votaries. I beseech you, therefore, let your first care be to lower riches in the common estimation. Let the high offices of Consul and Praetor be once bestowed on real dignity, and distinguished talents, not on superiority of fortune, and the possession of the latter will no longer have power to exalt, or to depress, in the opinion of the world."

## X.

### QUINTILIAN.

Quintilian—the school-master, the first to draw a salary from the Roman state; for, before his time, teaching was done by private instructors. The emperor Domitian established for him a professorship and awarded to him a handsome salary from the imperial treasury. Assuredly, none was more worthy of either the honor or the emolument.

Marcus Fabius Quintilian was born in Spain, in the year 40 A. D., and lived to the age of seventy-eight. He began as advocate, but soon abandoned the bar for his favorite vocation of teaching, which he followed the greater part of his life, instructing the youth in the arts of speech. Martial called him “the supreme controller of the restless youth.” The younger Pliny and two grand nephews of the emperor Domitian were among his pupils. In him ancient literary criticism reached its highest pitch of excellence, and he has been a guide to the rhetoricians and orators of all succeeding ages. His reviews are always very fine, and his judgments usually just. Some of his characterizations are very pretty; as when he speaks of how “Horace soars now and then, and is full of sweetness and grace, and in his varied forms and phrases is most fortunately bold;” or “the immortal swiftness of Sallust,” or “the milky richness of Livy;” always, indeed, showing a sensitive appreciation and accurate judgment of the merits of any author whom he touches. His great work is a complete treatise upon the subject of rhetoric, in twelve books, entitled “*De Institutiones Oratoris*.”

That he understood the nature of youth and was qualified to teach is evident from some of his maxims that have come down to us, of which the following are a few:

“Give me a boy who rouses when he is praised, who profits when he is encouraged, and who cries when he is defeated. Such a boy will be fired by ambition; he will be stung by reproach, and

animated by preference; never shall I apprehend any bad consequences from idleness in such a boy."

"By nature we are very tenacious of what we imbibe in the dawn of life, in the same manner as new vessels retain the flavor which they first drink in. There is no recovering wool to its native whiteness after it is dyed."

"Our minds are like our stomachs; they are whetted by the change of food, and variety supplies both with fresh appetite."

"I have no great opinion of any boy's capacity, whose aim is to raise a laugh by his talent of mimicry."

Quintilian is in accord with the most advanced educational authorities of the present day on the subject of corporal punishment. That he did not believe that to spare the rod was to spoil the child, is evident from the following paragraph:

"I am by no means for whipping boys who are learning—in the first place, because the practice is unseemly and slavish; and in the next place, if the boy's genius is so dull as to be proof against reproach, he will, like a worthless slave, become likewise insensible to blows."

He was a believer, also, in that great educational truth which is expressed in the homely adage: "You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear," for he says:

"One thing, however, I must promise, that without the assistance of natural capacity, rules and precepts are of no efficacy."

As a teacher of eloquence he lays down the following fundamental principle:

"Now, according to my definition, no men can be a complete orator unless he is a good man. It is the heart and mental energy that inspires eloquence."

The following, upon the same subject, is fine:

"Brilliant thoughts are, I consider, as it were, the eyes of eloquence; but I would not that the body were all eyes, lest the other members should lose their proper functions."

And this:

"But give me the reader who figures in his mind the idea of eloquence, all divine as she is; who, with Euripides, gazes upon

her all-subduing charms; who seeks not his reward from the venal fee for his voice, but from that reflection, that imagination, that perfection of mind which time cannot destroy nor fortune affect." How like the noble sentiment attributed to our own Rufus Choate, that "He does not truly succeed as an advocate who practices his profession with an eye single to the golden fee."

In the usage of language he proclaims the cardinal rule that "The common usage of learned men, however, is the surest director of speaking; and language, like money, when it receives the public stamp, ought to have currency." Which suggests the oft-quoted lines of Pope:

"In words as in fashions, the same rule will hold,  
Alike too fantastic if too new or old;  
Be not the first by whom the new are tried,  
Nor yet the last to lay the old aside."

The following are among the characteristic sayings of Quintilian:

"Things forbidden alone are loved immoderately; when they may be enjoyed, they do not excite the desire."

"Though ambition in itself is a vice, it is yet often the parent of virtue."

"Virtue, although she in some measure receives her beginning from nature, yet gets her finishing excellencies from learning."

"Nature has formed us with honest inclinations, and when we are so inclined, it is so very easy to be virtuous, that, if we seriously reflect, nothing is more astonishing than to see so many wicked."

"Cultivate innocence, and think not that your deeds, because they are concealed, will be unpunished; you have committed them under the canopy of heaven—there is a more powerful witness."

PART TWO

GREAT GREEK AUTHORS

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- I. AESCHYLUS.
- II. ARISTOTLE.
- III. EURIPIDES.
- IV. HOMER.
- V. PLATO.
- VI. PLUTARCH.
- VII. MENANDER
- VIII. PINDAR.
- IX. ANACREON.
- X. THEOCRITUS.

Land of the Muse! within thy bowers  
Her soul-entrancing echoes rung,  
While on their course the rapid hour  
Paused at the melody she sung—  
Till every grove and every hill,  
And every stream that flowed along  
From morn to night repeated still  
The winning harmony of song.  
—From “Greece,” by James G. Brooks.



## I.

### AESCHYLUS.

Aeschylus, the "father of Greek tragedy," was a native of Eleusis, in Attica, where he was born B. C. 525. When thirty-five years of age he took a distinguished part in the battle of Marathon. In a painting portraying this battle, the likeness of Aeschylus appears in the foreground, thus sharing the honors with Miltiades, the general commanding the Greek forces in that memorable conflict. Six years later, at the age of forty-one (in B. C. 484, the year in which Herodotus the historian was born), Aeschylus attained his first dramatic success by winning the prize for tragedy—a feat which he accomplished thirteen times in the following sixteen years.

The literary style of Aeschylus, though turgid at times, is distinguished for its grandeur, fire and force. He has little of tenderness, but his theme is lofty, his thought is noble, his manner elevated, and his grasp is bold and strong. Finely expressive of his genius, and among the most beautiful creations of their kind, are the songs of the Furies in the "Eumenides," in "Agamemnon" the inspiration of Cassandra, and the ghost of Darius in "The Persians."

Aeschylus was invited to Sicily by King Hiero, a distinguished patron of the learned, who had induced Pindar and Simonides to reside at his court. One of his plays, "The Aetneans," was composed at the request of King Hiero. At another time he came from Athens to have his play, "The Persians," presented by invitation of the same King.

In the course of forty years of active work in the drama Aeschylus is believed to have written ninety plays, of which the titles of only seventy-nine are known today. Only seven of his tragedies remain. The rest are lost. The seven tragedies extant are "The Suppliants," "The Persians," "The Seven Against Thebes," "Prometheus Bound," and the trilogy, "Agamemnon,"

"Choephoroi," and "Eumenides." Of the latter work Prof. Clifford Herschel Moore, a distinguished critic, remarks: "This trilogy represents the maturest work of Aeschylus, and we may well doubt whether a greater was ever written." Mark Pattison declares it to be "the grandest work of creative genius in the whole range of literature."

In its highest form, Aeschylus was undoubtedly the creator of the Greek drama. Not only did he introduce action to supersede the perpetual chorus, and dramatic dialogue in place of long narrations, but he was the first to introduce masks, costumes and scenic effects. He bodies forth the creations of his genius in language of sublimity and power, and his place is secure among the master spirits of the race.

From the "Prometheus Bound," are taken the beautiful and familiar lines:

"Ye waves

That o'er the interminable ocean wreath  
Your crisped smiles."

And here is a pretty fragment (Plumptre's translation):

"So in the Libyan fable it is told  
That once an eagle stricken with a dart,  
Said, when he saw the fashion of the shaft,  
'With our own feathers, not by other's hands,  
Are we now smitten'."

Hear, also, his tribute to justice: "But justice shines in smoky cottages, and honors the pious. Leaving with averted eyes the gorgeous glare of gold obtained by polluted hands, she is wont to draw nigh to holiness, not reverencing wealth when falsely stamped with praise, and assigning to each deed its righteous doom."

And this, on tyranny, is as true today as when Aeschylus wrote it twenty-four hundred years ago:

"For, somehow, there is this disease in tyranny, not to put confidence in friends."

The conclusions of modern criticism are summarized by Lord Macaulay, with his customary precision and force, in the following quotation from his essay on John Milton:

“Æschylus was, head and heart, a lyric poet. \* \* \* At this period, accordingly, it was natural that the literature of Greece should be tinged with the Oriental style. And that style, we think, is clearly discernible in the works of Pindar and Æschylus. The latter often reminds us of the Hebrew writers. The Book of Job, indeed, in conduct and diction, bears a considerable resemblance to some of his dramas. Considered as plays, his works are absurd; considered as choruses, they are above all praise. If, for instance, we examine the address of Clytemnestra to Agamemnon on his return, or the description of the seven Argive Chiefs, by principles of dramatic writing, we shall instantly condemn them as monstrous. But if we forget the characters, and think only of the poetry, we shall admit that it has never been surpassed in energy and magnificence.”

## II.

### ARISTOTLE.

The most versatile intellect that mankind has ever known, the master mind of all antiquity and the great mental phenomenon in the history of human thought, that mighty prodigy of learning known to the world as Aristotle, still gleams adown the ages like a distant sun, a beacon-light of learning that casts its burning rays upon the farthest shores of time. Aristotle was born at Stagira, B. C. 384, eight years after the death of Socrates. He was one year older than his personal friend King Philip of Macedon, and was three years older than Demosthenes.

The son of a physician and naturalist of repute deriving his descent through a long line of medical ancestors dating back to the immortal Aesculapius, born to wealth and position, and reared in an atmosphere of learning, the influence of heredity and environment were united to create in the brain of Aristotle the most colossal mind that ever found abode within the frame of man. At the age of seventeen he proceeded to Athens, to become a pupil of Plato, with whom he remained for twenty years.

When Alexander the Great was born, King Philip announced the fact to Aristotle in this letter: "Know that a son is born to us. We thank the gods for their gift, but especially for bestowing it at the time when Aristotle lives; assuring ourselves that, educated by you, he will be worthy of us, and worthy of inheriting our kingdom." In due time the philosopher accepted the trust, and thus became the mentor of one of the greatest characters of history, and the pupil was never wanting in proper respect for his distinguished tutor. Years later, when he had defeated Darius in battle and was in hot pursuit of the fleeing Persians, Alexander paused to write his old teacher: "Alexander, wishing all happiness to Aristotle. You have not done right in publishing your

acroatic works. Wherein shall we be distinguished above others, if the learning, in which we were instructed, be communicated to the public? I would rather surpass other men in knowledge than in power."

Aristotle at the age of fifty set up his school in Athens near the temple of the Lycian Apollo, whence we derive our word "lyceum," the name applied to his school. Aristotle and his followers were called "Peripatetics," from the peripaton, or walk, which adorned the temple. Here he wrote and taught, and lived the life he loved, until jealous-hearted rivals, exasperated at his vast superiority, as mediocrity is so often angered at the sight of excellence, caused false charges of "impiety" to be preferred against him. He would have met the fate of Socrates had he not saved himself by a timely flight to Chalcis where, in the sixty-third year of his age, he died of a broken heart.

According to credible report, Aristotle was the author of four hundred books, but forty-six of which have survived to us. More than ten thousand commentators have sought to elucidate and illustrate his works. His influence has been enormous in every field of thought. He was the first to perfect a method of reasoning, and formal logic has made little improvement since his day. He raised to the status of independent disciplines the subjects of Logic, Grammar, Rhetoric, Literary Criticism, Politics, Psychology. He first discovered the law of the Association of Ideas. He collected 158 constitutions of various states, and was the first to essay a scientific treatise on government. He was the first great master of literary criticism. He was, as Dr. Gillies says, "not only the best critic in poetry, but himself a poet of the first eminence. Few of his verses indeed have reached modern times; but the few which remain prove him worthy of the sounding lyre of Pindar."

"Aristotle," as Hegel says, "penetrated into the whole universe of things, and subjected to the comprehension its scattered wealth; and the greatest number of the philosophical sciences owe to him their separation and commencement."

Education was his whole thought, the key-note of his life, the undying passion of his soul, and we may fittingly close this sketch with one of his sage admonitions upon the subject dearest to his heart:

“It would therefore be best that the state should pay attention to education, and on right principles, and that it should have the power to enforce it; but if it be neglected as a public measure, then it would seem to be the duty of every individual to contribute to the virtue of his children and his friends, or at least to make this his deliberate purpose.”

### III.

#### EURIPIDES.

Of the three great tragic poets of ancient Greece—Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides—the last named was the latest. While Sophocles is considered the most masterly of the three, Aeschylus was the first, and Euripides exceeded either in tenderness and in richness of moral sentiment. However, as Dr. Blair says, “Both Euripides and Sophocles have very high merit as tragic poets. They are elegant and beautiful in their style; just, for the most part, in their thoughts; they speak with the voice of nature; and, making allowance for the difference of ancient and modern ideas, in the midst of all their simplicity, they are touching and interesting.”

Euripides was born in Salamis while the great battle was in progress there between the Greeks and Persians. He grew up in Athens without any of the advantages of wealth, but was well educated. He was the pupil of Anaxagoras—that philosopher who said “philosophy has been my worldly ruin and my soul’s prosperity”—and was a warm personal friend of Socrates. He was fifteen years younger than his great contemporary, Sophocles, who frequently praised his work with the utmost magnanimity. Aristophanes, the comic writer, was his bitter enemy, and attacked him with satire and ridicule in a manner so cutting and galling to his sensitive nature that this circumstance is offered as one of the reasons for his quitting Athens. Aristotle, however, has placed the seal of his own approval upon the literary excellence of Euripides, and this alone, if other proofs were wanting, would firmly fix his exalted position among the classics of ancient Greece. Plutarch tells us that after the disastrous defeat of the Athenians before Syracuse, the Sicilians spared those who could repeat any of the poetry of Euripides. “Some there were,” says he, “who owed their preservation to Euripides. Of all the

Grecians, his was the muse with whom the Sicilians were most in love. It is said that upon this occasion a number of Athenians on their return home went to Euripides, and thanked him in the most grateful manner for their obligations to his pen."

Unlike the greater number of the brilliant minds of that day, Euripides kept himself aloof from politics, and spent the greater part of his life in his library, immersed in the pursuits of literature. The king of Macedonia, Archelaus, a patron of letters, invited the poet to his court at Pella, and there he spent the remainder of his days. Upon his death, the highest honors were paid to his memory, by order of the king. Archelaus erected a monument to him, bearing the inscription: "Never, O Euripides, will thy memory be forgotten!" The Athenians were anxious to remove his remains to Athens, but their request was denied. They then erected to his memory at Athens a cenotaph bearing this inscription: "All Greece is the monument of Euripides; Macedonian earth covers but his bones." Lycurgas, the orator, erected a statue to him in the theatre, Sophocles, still surviving, publicly lamented his death, and all Athens made tardy amends for the neglect of the great dramatist during his life.

Tradition accredits Euripides with the authorship of ninety plays, but eighteen of which survive. He has found imitators and admirers in both ancient and modern times, and his work has profoundly influenced the drama in England, Germany and France. None of the ancient dramatists has been more extensively honored by modern editions, such as those in Germany by Kirckhoff, Nauck, Prinz and Wecklein, Nestle, and Schwartz; in England, by Terrell, Verrall, Jerram, Way, Mahaffy and Coleridge; and in France by Decharme and others.

Following are some of his best known sayings:

"To be modest and pay reverence to the gods; this I think to be the most honorable and the wisest thing for mortals."

"The worst of all diseases among men is impudence."

"Courage profits man naught, if God denies His aid."

"That is the noble man, who is full of confident hopes; the abject soul despairs."



"Silence and modesty are the best ornaments of a woman, and to remain quietly within the house."

"The woman who, in her husband's absence, seeks to set her beauty forth, mark her as a wanton; she would not adorn her person to appear abroad unless she was inclined to ill."

Here is a particularly fine passage on the marks of true nobility:

"There is no outward mark to note the noble, for the inward qualities of man are never clearly to be distinguished. I have often seen a man of no worth spring from a noble sire, and worthy children arise from vile parents, meanness grovelling in the rich man's mind and generous feelings in the poor. How, then, shall we discern and judge aright? By wealth? we shall make use of a bad criterion. Shall it be by arms? But who, by looking to the spear, could thereby discern the dauntless heart? Will ye not learn to judge the man by manners and by deeds? For such men as these discharge their duties with honor to the state and to their house. Mere flesh without a spirit is nothing more than statues in the forum. For the strong arm does not abide the shock of battle better than the weak; this depends on nature and an intrepid mind."

#### IV.

#### HOMER.

Seven cities vied for Homer's birth with emulation pious;  
Salamis, Samos, Calaphon, Rhodes, Argos, Athens, Chios.

—Greek Anthology.

The preponderance of legendary history, however, indicates that Smyrna was the birthplace of Homer. There are tales, also, that he was blind; and that he was a roving minstrel, singing ballads and begging, as he wandered from place to place. There are no positive biographical facts. Even his very existence has been doubted by a formidable school of German critics, headed by Professor Frederick Wolf, of Halle. But the "Illiad" exists. So does the Odyssey. They constitute Homer, and are all that we really know of Homer, at this hour. The work is there. It speaks for itself. Whether it is but a skillful compilation of still older ballads, it boots us not to inquire. Homer today is just as we found him at the dawn of Grecian civilization. If we except the Bible and the Veddas, he is the most ancient book in the world. He has supplied for all ages the one grand model of the epic poem, and his work is the common heritage of the human race.

Translations of Homer exist in all the great modern languages. Among the most admired have been those of Cesarotti and Monti in Italian, that of Montbel in French, that of Voss in German, and those of Pope, Chapman and Bryant in English. But the sonorous fluency and vehement fire of Homer have never been adequately portrayed in any other tongue. As Prof. Blair of Edinburgh declared: "I know indeed no author to whom it is more difficult to do justice in a translation, than Homer. As the plainness of his diction, were it literally rendered, would often appear flat in any modern language; so, in the midst of that plainness, and not a little heightened by it, there are everywhere

breaking forth upon us flashes of native fire, of sublimity and beauty, which hardly any language, except his own, could preserve. His versification has been universally acknowledged to be uncommonly melodious; and to carry, beyond that of any poet, a resemblance in the sound to the sense and meaning."

As Lord Bacon said, "The best part of beauty is that which a picture cannot express," just so true is it that the celestial fire of Homer defies the translator's art. Thus, the nod of Jupiter, extolled by all critics as one of the noblest examples of the sublime in writing, is literally translated: "He spoke, and bending his sable brows, gave the awful nod; while he shook the celestial locks of his immortal head, all Olympus was shaken." Pope translates the passage as follows:

"He spoke: and awful bends his sable brows,  
Shakes his ambrosial curls, and gives the nod,  
The stamp of fate, and sanction of a god.  
High heaven with trembling the dread signal took,  
And all Olympus to its center shook."

Literally translated the majesty of the Homeric concept is preserved, but its exquisite euphony is marred; while Pope clogs the image in order to make an English rhyme.

These difficulties and these differences, although they may dismay, will not surprise us if we but bear in mind that Homer, when he plumed himself for his matchless eagle flight to the golden peaks of song, garbed his glowing thoughts in the most musical language that ever rippled from the human tongue or dropped its fructifying sweetness from the lips of man. Yet, these translations often do contain the living flame of genuine Homeric fire. Thus, in the twentieth book of the *Illiad*, where all the gods take part, we read again from Pope:

"But when the powers descending swelled the fight,  
Then tumult rose, fierce rage, and pale affright:  
Now through the trembling shores Minerva calls,  
And now she thunders from the Grecian walls.  
Mars, hov'ring o'er his Troy, his terror shrouds  
In gloomy tempests, and a night of clouds;

Now through each Trojan heart he fury pours,  
 With voice divine, from Illion's topmost towers—  
 Above, the sire of gods his thunder rolls,  
 And peals on peals redoubled rend the polls;  
 Beneath, stern Neptune shakes the solid ground,  
 The forests wave, the mountains nod around;  
 Through all her summits tremble Ida's woods,  
 And from their sources boil her hundred floods:  
 Troy's turrets totter on the rocking plain,  
 And the toss'd waves beat the heaving main.  
 Deep in the dismal region of the dead,  
 Th' infernal monarch rear'd his horrid head,  
 Leapt from his throne, lest Neptune's arm should lay  
 His dark dominions open to the day  
 And pour in light on Pluto's drear abodes,  
 Abhorr'd by men, and dreadful e'en to gods.  
 Such wars th' immortals wage; such horrors rend  
 The world's vast concave when the gods contend."

But Homer is not all a clash of arms and din of steel. He not only runs the gamut of all the passions known to man, but in sylvan scenes he reflects Nature's rare artistic power, and paints with most entrancing skill the sunset and the dawn, the calm of midnight and the glory of the stars. Thus, in book 7 of the *Illiad*:

"Now from the smooth, deep ocean-stream the sun  
 Began to climb the heavens, and with new rays  
 Smote the surrounding fields."

Or in book 8:

"Now deep in Ocean sunk the lamp of light  
 And drew behind the cloudy veil of night."

And in book 3 of the *Odyssey*:

"But when Aurora, daughter of the dawn,  
 With rosy lustre purpled o'er the lawn."

Again, there is the storm scene, from book 15 of the *Illiad*:

"Bursts as a wave that from the clouds impends,  
 And swell'd with tempests on the ship descends.  
 White are the decks with foam; the winds aloud

Howl o'er the masts and sing through ev'ry shroud:  
Pale, trembling, tir'd, the sailors freeze with fears;  
And instant death on every wave appears."

Now let us contrast the tempest with this peaceful scene of lovely night and all its sylvan beauty and pastoral calm: "As when in heaven the stars around the glittering moon beam loveliest amid the breathless air, and in clear outline appear every hill, sharp peak and woody dell; deep upon deep the sky breaks open, and each star shines forth, while joy fills the shepherd's heart."

"The multitude of things in Homer is wonderful," says Hazlett—"the splendor, the truth, the power, the variety." As Matthew Arnold said, "the Homeric poems are the most important poetical monument existing." To the ancient Greek, another critic says. "Homer was Bible, Shakespeare, Milton, and Domesday Book in one." All poets since his time have been indebted to Homer. As Pope observes, even "the periphrases and circumlocutions by which Homer expresses the single act of dying have supplied succeeding poets with all their manners of phrasing it."

Says Addison (*Spectator*. No. 417): "Homer is in his province when he is describing a battle or a multitude, a hero or a god. Virgil is never better pleased than when he is in his elysium, or copying out an entertaining picture. Homer's epithets generally mark out what is great; Virgil's, what is agreeable. Nothing can be more magnificent than the figure Jupiter makes in the first *Illiad*, nor more charming than that of Venus in the first *Aeneid*." But Virgil boldly translated whole passages from Homer and placed them in the *Aeneid* as his own. Homer's work is original in execution, theme and concept. Virgil, Tasso, Milton and the rest have had their models by which to work; but Homer's model was Nature alone, and without human pattern, guide or compass, he produced the greatest epic work the world has ever known.

As old Sir John Denham said so long ago, in his "Progress of Learning:"

"I can no more believe old Homer blind,  
Than those who say the sun hath never shined;  
The age wherein he lived was dark, but he  
Could not want sight, who taught the world to see."

## V.

### PLATO.

Aristocles, afterwards known as Plato, "the broad-browed," was born on the island of Aegina, B. C. 427, and died at Athens in 347 B. C. Through his mother he was a descendant of Solon, one of the "Seven Wise Men of Greece," and on his father's side he traced his lineage from Codrus, one of the early kings of Athens. He enjoyed such early opportunities as a comfortable fortune could provide, and in his youth was accomplished in all the culture of the times.

Intellectually, Plato was the child of Socrates and the parent of Aristotle. At the age of twenty, upon coming under the spell of the master mind of Socrates, he is said to have burned all the poems he had written, and from that time forth, for the remaining sixty years of his life, his capacious mind was wholly occupied with the profound speculations which have since dazzled the world with their brilliancy and wielded a constantly growing influence upon the minds of men.

He remained a pupil of Socrates until B. C. 399, when judicial murder put an end to the pure and noble life of that most majestic character of antiquity and destroyed what George Henry Lewes, in his *History of Philosophy*, called "the grandest figure in the world's Pantheon: the bravest, truest, simplest, wisest of mankind." We may the better understand the feelings of Plato upon being thus deprived of his master, when we read the "Phaedo," detailing the events of Socrates' last day on earth, and developing, in the course of the dialogue, the beautiful doctrine of the immortality of the soul. Xenophon, also a disciple of Socrates and a companion of Plato, has expressed not less truly the feelings of both upon that most pathetic occasion, in the touching and tender tribute so gracefully set forth in the *Memorabilia* (iv. 7.)

Shocked by the cruelty and crushed by the ingratitude and bigotry of the tyrants who then ruled Athens in the name of democracy, Plato departed into foreign lands. It is believed that he visited every country in which learning flourished in any degree. He delved into the lore of the Egyptians and studied the philosophies of the east. His itinerary is not known with certainty. But it is known that he was absent from Athens a great deal during the ten years following the death of Socrates. In the course of his peregrinations, Plato visited Dionysius the Elder, tyrant of Syracuse. The tyrant caused him to be sold into slavery. Plato, however, was soon ransomed by his friends.

Returning finally to Athens, in the fortieth year of his age, Plato set up his school in the groves of the Academia and began to expound his dialectics and to teach the immortal doctrines which still encircle his name with a halo of eternal light. To this school flocked the bright minds of the world. Here was fashioned the sinewy intellect of Aristotle and here was moulded the mighty genius of Demosthenes.

“Hither as to a fountain

Other suns repair, and in their urns

Draw golden light.”

Learning of Plato's vast renown, Dionysius of Syracuse wrote to express the hope that the philosopher would not think ill of him, and received this august and laconic reply: “Plato hath not leisure to think of Dionysius.” For a period of forty years, and until death ended his labors, Plato continued to write and teach. It is believed that all his writings have reached us unimpaired.

“For richness and beauty of imagination,” says one of the foremost English critics, “no philosophic writer, ancient or modern, is comparable to Plato. The only fault of his imagination is, such an excess of fertility as allows it sometimes to obscure his judgment. It frequently carries him into allegory, fiction, enthusiasm, and the airy regions of mystical theology. The philosopher is, at times, lost in the poet. But whether we be edified with the matter or not (and much edification he often affords),

we are always entertained with the manner; and left with a strong impression of the sublimity of the author's genius."

Associated with Plato's doctrine of immortality was his doctrine of the soul's reminiscence, a subconscious recollection of beauties contemplated in the pre-earthly existence, a thought most beautifully expressed in Wordsworth's ode on "Intimations of Immortality":

"Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:  
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,  
Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
And cometh from afar:  
Not in entire forgetfulness,  
And not in utter nakedness,  
But trailing clouds of glory do we come  
From God who is our home."

The writings of Plato not only exercised great influence upon such minds as those of Cicero and Plutarch, followers of "the vision splendid" in ancient times, but they profoundly affected the Stoics as well as the early Christian Fathers, and cast their mystic spell far into future ages, where we find their indelible impress upon much of the world's best literature. One cannot proceed far, in either literature or philosophy, without encountering the massive intellect and the golden eloquence of Plato. Thus do we find it reflected in Addison's "Cato", Act V., Sc. I:

"It must be so—Plato, thou reasonest well.—  
Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,  
This longing after immortality?  
Or whence this secret dread, and inward horror,  
Of falling into naught? Why shrinks the soul  
Back on herself, and startles at destruction?  
'Tis the divinity that stirs within us;  
'Tis heaven itself that points out an hereafter,  
And intimates eternity to man."



Plato is greatest in his metaphysics. He has been aptly called "the Shakespeare of ideas." He is not so happy in the political writings of his later years. He totally misconceived the duties of citizenship and the proper functions of the state. Mr. Grote thinks that he borrowed much of his "Republic" from the Spartan constitution of Lycurgas. He would have done far better to have elaborated the work of his own great ancestor, Solon, in the constitution of Athens. Of these later works we can only observe, with Prof. Jowett: "The wings of his imagination have begun to droop, but his experience of life remains, and he turns from the contemplation of the eternal to take a last sad look at human affairs." Plato's "Republic" was the natural progenitor of More's "Utopia," Bacon's "New Atlantis," Harrington's "Oceana," and Campanella's "City of the Sun."

## VI.

### PLUTARCH.

The exact dates of the birth and death of Plutarch are unknown, but the period of his life may be safely approximated at A. D. 50 to A. D. 120. Although he established no new school of thought, and although his style of composition is not distinguished for any peculiar beauty or elegance, he is nevertheless one of the most celebrated writers of antiquity, and is remarkable for his humane principles and his unsullied moral excellence.

Plutarch was born at the little town of Chaeronea, and spent his last days there. It is also known that he was entrusted with a diplomatic mission to Rome, and resided for some time at that great capital, where, in the time of Domitian, he delivered lectures on philosophy. There is a report, doubted by many, but believed by Langhorne and others, that he was tutor to the emperor Trajan. Certainly the humane traits of that excellent prince would suggest naught against the supposition. It is definitely known, however, that Plutarch's nephew, Sextus, was a preceptor of the great Marcus Aurelius, who publicly acknowledged, in his "Meditations," his indebtedness to that philosopher, in terms peculiarly applicable to Plutarch himself.

The greater part of the writings of Plutarch are now no longer extant. Of those that remain, civilization is chiefly indebted to him for his "Lives of Illustrious Men."

Among all the biographical works ever written, in either ancient or modern times, Plutarch's Lives will easily rank first. No writer has had a greater influence upon the youthful mind. Alfieri was first inspired with a passion for literature by reading Plutarch's Lives. The great Napoleon received his first inspiration from the same source. He has been accorded the highest praise by such critics as Petrarch, Montaigne, St. Evremont and Montesquieu, and was Montaigne's favorite author. Sir John Lubbock places Plutarch's Lives among the one hundred best

books which should be in every library and read by every person pretending to any degree of culture. The world's literature in all ages since his day has been embellished by this great work.

In 1579 Sir Thomas North translated the *Lives* from a French version into English, and this work beyond all doubt furnished Shakespeare with the materials for *Coriolanus*, *Timon of Athens*, *Julius Caesar*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*. In some instances the great English dramatist has appropriated the language of Plutarch almost verbatim. This is particularly true of his "*Julius Caesar*," and also of his "*Coriolanus*." "*The Life of Theseus*," and "*The Life of Pericles*" also served in Shakespeare's *Midsummer-Night's Dream* and in *Pericles*.

It is remarkable how great a portion of our knowledge of the illustrious men of antiquity is drawn from Plutarch. Thus, Lord Bacon says: "One of the Seven was wont to say: 'That laws were like cob-webs; where the small flies were caught, and the great break through'." But none of the Seven Wise Men of Greece ever said any such thing. In the life of Solon, Plutarch records the fact that while the great Athenian was working on his laws, he was visited by Anarcharsis, the Scythian, and "when Anarcharsis heard what Solon was doing, he laughed at the folly of thinking that he could restrain the unjust proceedings and avarice of his fellow citizens by written laws, which, he said, resembled in every way spiders' webs, and would, like them, catch and hold only the poor and weak, while the rich and powerful would easily break through them." Curiously enough, the modern world, following Bacon, has quite unjustly attributed this Scythian sentiment to Solon.

Many are the noble sentiments that gleam in the "*Lives*," as well as in the "*Morals*" of Plutarch. However, space permits us to present but few:

"It is more fitting to err on the side of religion, from a regard to ancient and received opinion, than to err through obstinacy and presumption."

And this, on education:

“Men derive no greater advantage from a liberal education than that it tends to soften and polish their nature, by improving their reasoning faculties and training their habits, thus producing an evenness of temper and banishing all extremes.”

And this, on statesmanship:

“The honest and upright statesman pays no regard to the popular voice except with this view, that the confidence it procures him may facilitate his designs, and crown them with success.” In other words, a great statesman must do the right and just thing, whether his constituency wish him to do so or not.

## VII.

### MENANDER.

Menander, a native of Athens (born B. C. 342, died B. C. 291), was the most celebrated poet of the "new comedy." His father was a famous Athenian general. Menander was an intimate friend of the philosopher Epicurus, whose teaching was reflected in the light-hearted, sprightly nature and frolicsome disposition of the poet. He was of handsome person, gay, and fond of luxury, but does not appear to have been grossly addicted to the vices of his time. He was the author of more than a hundred plays, and for several centuries after his death his plays were the most popular among the Grecian comedies.

Menander spent the greater part of his life mingling in the swirl of Athenian gaiety, while residing at his villa near the city. The King of Egypt, one of his ardent admirers, extended to him a pressing invitation to reside as his guest at the Egyptian capital, but the Greek poet preferred his own care-free life to the gilded conventionality and soul-bought largess of a royal court.

Not a single one of his plays has survived to modern times, but we may form some conception of their excellence by the numerous imitations afforded us in the plays of Plautus and Terence. Ancient critics extolled the writings of Menander for their poetic artistry, refined wit and sententious humor; and for his grasp of human nature, and the purity of his moral concepts. More than a thousand fragments of his works have come down to us, and they in no wise detract from the esteem in which we are constrained to hold him because of the laudations of ancient authorities.

We are indebted to German scholarship for the best extant editions of the "Fragments": one by Meineke (Berlin, 1841) and the other by Kock (Leipzig, 1888).

Menander's incisive wit is aptly set forth in his dealings with the "eternal feminine," as when he says:

"Happy am I who have no wife!" Or, this: "Where are women, there are all kinds of mischief." And this: "The wife ought to play the second part, the husband ruling in everything; for there is no family in which the wife has had the upper hand, which has not gone to ruin."

Elsewhere he says: "To marry a wife, if we regard the truth, is an evil, but it is a necessary evil." How suggestive, this, of St. Chrysostom's description of woman as "a necessary evil, a natural temptation, a desirable calamity, a domestic peril, a deadly fascination and a painted ill!" And of the outburst of honest old Thomas Otway, in "The Orphan", (Act iii., Sc. 1):

"What mighty ills have not been done by woman!  
Who was't betray'd the Capitol? A woman;  
Who lost Mark Antony the world? A woman;  
Who was the cause of a long ten years' war,  
And laid at last old Troy in ashes? Woman;  
Destructive, damnable, deceitful woman!"

In the same spirit did Milton cry out in the anguish of his heart (Paradise Lost, Bk. ix., l. 888):

"Oh, why did God,  
Creator wise, that peopled highest Heaven  
With spirits masculine, create at last  
This novelty on earth, this fair defect  
Of nature, and not fill the world at once  
With men as angels without feminine,  
Or find some other way to generate  
Mankind? This mischief had not then befallen."

Following his anti-feminine bent, Menander also observed that "A daughter is an embarrassing and ticklish possession." Perhaps he gave the cue to Sheridan (The Duenna, Act i., sc. 3):

"If a daughter you have, she's the plague of your life;  
No peace shall you know, though you've buried your wife!  
At twenty she mocks at the duty you taught her—  
Oh, what a plague is an obstinate daughter!"

In another fragment Menander pursues the same thought: "A wise son is a delight to his father, while a daughter is a troublesome possession." And then he adds: "Of all wild beasts on earth or in sea, the greatest is a woman."

But Menander did not write solely to provide texts for the mysogonists. Passing from the contemplation of sentiments so little promotive of marital felicity and domestic concord, we find our poet gifted with a wealth of wisdom denied to many minds of more sober hue. Thus, he says:

"Evil communications corrupt good manners"—a phrase we afterwards find in the New Testament.

"No just man has ever become suddenly rich."

"It does not become any living man to say, 'This will not happen to me'."

"Every wise and honorable man hates a lie."

"Nothing is more useful to a man than silence."

"Whosoever lends a greedy ear to a slanderous report is either himself of a radically bad disposition, or a mere child in sense."

"How pleasant a thing it is for brothers to dwell together in unity"—almost the exact words of the 133rd Psalm: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"

"It is the mind that ought to be rich; for the riches of this world only feed the eyes, and serve merely as a veil to cover the realities of life."

That Menander knew something about the science of health preservation is evident from the following:

"The plague dwells where sanitary laws are neglected."

Menander won the prize in comedy at the age of twenty-one, and achieved seven similar triumphs during his dramatic career. He was fond of athletic sports, and was drowned while swimming in the harbor of the Pireaeus. Menander loved the country life, and it was a great saying of his that "Men are taught virtue and love of independence by living in the country."

Finally, he was not oblivious of the lesson of mortality: "If thou wishest to know what thou art, look at the monuments of the dead as thou passest along the road; there thou wilt find the bones and light dust of kings, and tyrants, and wise men, and of those who prided themselves on their blood and riches, on their glorious deeds, and on the beauty of their persons; but none of these things could resist the power of time. All men have a common grave. Looking at these things, thou mayest know what thou art." Yea, verily! As it is written in the Book of Genesis (iii:19)—"For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."



## VIII.

### PINDAR.

It is related by Plutarch, in his *Life of Alexander the Great*, that when Thebes fell before his conquering arms only the house of Pindar was spared, and thus did the poet's posterity escape the wholesale destruction visited upon their city; so great was Alexander's veneration of the memory of the Theban poet. The Spartan soldiery, noted for implacable cruelty, had already, on a previous occasion, shown by their forbearance the same pious regard for the inspired Theban.

Thus was impressed upon the ancient mind the fame of Pindar, the father of lyric poetry. He was born at or near Thebes, B. C. 522, and died B. C. 442. He was educated in music and poetry, and showed great talent at an early age. An old Grecian legend recites that in his youth a swarm of bees alighted upon his lips, attracted by the sweetness that was soon to richly trickle forth its honeyed harmonies of entrancing verse. Pindar drank deeply of the pure Pierian spring, and soared on golden wing unto the highest pinnacle of song. His praises were sounded by such eminent masters as Cicero and Pausanias. Plato called him the "divine Pindar," and distinguished him by the epithet "most wise." Clement of Alexandria, one of the early Christian Fathers, declared him to have been well versed in the Hebrew Scriptures. Pindar was contemporary with Aeschylus, and shared, with that great master of Greek tragedy, the warm personal friendship of King Hiero of Syracuse, at whose court he resided for four years. Of the golden treasury of verse created by his magic pen, only the "Triumphal Odes" have reached our times. Of all his paeans, odes and hymns, which smote the ear of antiquity with the voice of a god and trembled away into the silence of the ages, the greater part are lost; but the dying echo of his silver-throated trump still lingers in such lines as these, describ-

ing the islands of the blessed, in the Second Olympic Ode:

“But they whose spirit thrice refined  
Each arduous conquest could endure,  
And keep the firm and perfect mind  
From all contagion pure;  
Along the stated path of Jove  
To Saturn’s royal courts above  
Have trod their heavenly way  
Where round the islands of the bless’d  
The ocean breezes play;  
There golden flow’rets ever blow,  
Some springing from earth’s verdant breast,  
These on the lonely branches glow,  
While those are nurtured by the waves below.  
From them the inmates of these seats divine  
Around their hands and hair the woven garlands twine.”

In his translations Pindar has not been so fortunate as have others among the Greek classics. Among the most elaborate of modern criticisms is the profound and scholarly work of Schmidt, in German, and the brilliant essay of Villemain, in French. Among the most successful English translations are those of Carey, Abraham Moore, Morice, and Baring. Pindar has had many imitators among both the ancients and the moderns. The Pindaric Odes of Thomas Gray are the purest specimens of their kind in English. The many attempts among the Latins to imitate Pindar were deprecated by wise old Horace, who said, in his “*Carmina*.”

“He who studies to imitate the poet Pindar, O Julius, relies on artificial wings, fastened on with wax.”

Horace thus enumerates the numerous themes upon which the prolific muse of Pindar was employed:

“Whether th’ immortal gods he sings  
In a no less immortal strain,  
Or the great acts of god-descended kings,  
Who in his numbers still survive and reign;  
Whether in Pisa’s race he please  
To carve in polish’d verse the conqueror’s image;  
Whether some brave man’s untimely fate  
In words worth dying for he celebrate;  
Such mournful and such pleasing words.  
As joy to his mother’s and his mistress’ grief affords.”

The quotation is from the ode of Horace beginning “Pindarum quisquis,” etc., and the translation is by Cowley.

Pindar was probably the premier panegyrist of all history. His fame extended throughout all the Hellenic states, and by every great city and state he was called upon to compose the choruses, hymns and triumphal odes for great festive occasions. And therefore Horace quite truly says that many ancient kings who would otherwise be unknown to fame

“\* \* \* in his numbers still survive and reign.”

In concluding this sketch, let us offer one Pindaric phrase that has stood the test of twenty-five centuries and is still true today: “In every form of government a straight forward, plain-speaking man is most respected, whether it be a despotism, or tumultuous democracy, or where the educated few hold sway.”

## IX.

### ANACREON.

I see Anacreon smile and sing;  
His silver tresses breathe perfume;  
His cheeks display a second spring  
Of roses, taught by wine to bloom.  
Away, deceitful Care! away,  
And let me listen to his lay.

—Akenside, Ode XIII., "On Lyric Poetry."

Anacreon, the leading amatory poet of Greece, and one of the greatest lyric bards of all time, flourished during the greater part of the sixth century before the Christian era, and was contemporary with Cyrus the Great, King Polycrates of Samos, and Hipparchus, of Athens. He was a native of Teos, a city of Ionia. It is said that by the captivating strains of his songs he softened the heart of Polycrates and developed in the tyrant a spirit of kindness toward his subjects. Hipparchus, the Athenian tyrant, said by Plato to have been the first to edit the poems of Homer and cause them to be sung at public festivals, heard of the fame of the Ionic bard and sent a galley with fifty oars to bring him across the Aegean sea. So greatly was Anacreon esteemed in his native city that his likeness was stamped upon the coins; and in Athens, after his death, a statue of him was erected at the Acropolis.

Only a few of the odes of Anacreon remain, but they are sufficient to portray the enchanting elegance of his flowing verse. Thomas Moore says, in the preface to his translation of the "Odes of Anacreon": "After the very enthusiastic eulogiums bestowed both by ancients and moderns upon the poems of Anacreon, we need not be diffident at expressing our raptures at their beauty, nor hesitate to pronounce them the most polished remains of

antiquity. They are, indeed, all beauty, all enchantment." So speaks one of the great masters of English verse. We need not, however, seek the grand conflagrations of Homer in the love-sparks of the Teian muse; for, as he himself has sung in the Second Ode (Moore's translation):

"Give me the harp of epic song,  
Which Homer's finger thrilled along;  
But tear away the sanguine string,  
For war is not the theme I sing."

Quite to the contrary, indeed, we find him ever "dancing to the lute's soft strain," where "purple clusters twine," and "hyacinths sweet odors breathe," amid the "perfumed gales from beds of flowers," tuning his lyre to "love's sweet silver sounds;" celebrating "blithe Bacchus, the generous god of wine," or "Venus, love's sweet smiling queen, rising from her silver sea," cheering his convivial votaries with "golden goblets" of "rosy wine," while trilling forth pulsating symphonies of love.

One of the choicest bits of lyric art is his Fifty-third Ode, "On the Rose," from which are culled the following familiar lines (Bourne's translation), detailing the origin of the poet's favorite flower:

"A drop of pure nectareous dew  
From heaven the bless'd immortals threw;  
A while it trembled on the thorn,  
And then the lovely rose was born.  
To Bacchus they the flower assign,  
And roses still his brows intwine."

The Fifth Ode of Bourne's translation is also inspired by the rose, which he describes as adding "fresh fragrance to the wine;" and then the poet strikes his quivering harp and warbles forth in most exquisite mood:

"Oh, lovely rose! to thee I sing,  
Thou sweetest, fairest child of spring!  
Oh, thou art dear to all the gods,  
The darling of their bless'd abodes.  
Thy breathing buds and blossoms fair  
Entwine young Cupid's golden hair,  
When gayly dancing, hand in hand,  
He joins the Graces' lovely band."

Anon the old bard laughs at himself and makes merry over his advancing age, as when, in the Eleventh Ode, he sings:

"'Anacreon', the lasses say,  
'Old fellow, you have had your day,'" etc.

In the Nineteenth Ode he very gravely sets forth his reasons for drinking:

"The earth drinks up the genial rains  
Which deluge all her thirsty plains;  
The lofty trees that pierce the sky  
Drain up the earth and leave her dry;  
Th' insatiate sea imbibes, each hour,  
The welcome breeze that brings the show'r;  
The sun, whose fires so fiercely burn,  
Absorbs the wave; and, in her turn,  
The modest moon enjoys, each night,  
Large draughts of his celestial light.  
Then, sapient sirs, pray tell me why,  
If all things drink, why may not I?"

From such ribald merriment he turns to sighs of tender sentiment and rosy love, like his ode "The Dream," of which Madame Dacier says that it is one of the finest and most gallant odes of antiquity, and has been greatly admired by all who "rove the flowery paths of love."

How like the mellow-throated nightingale's melodious note, trilling flute-like from some scented Lydian grove, are the sweet, seductive measures of Anacreon, with all his lilting levities, piping plaintively his tender songs of love, breathing fragrance where they blow, murmuring his soft Aeolian sounds through rosy bowers, or in the fronded shadow of the trees, where yet the loitering Graces love to linger among the whispering violets, and wood-nymphs dance upon the sward! He did not essay the empyrean heights of song, buoyed by the battle-trump, to revel in the conflicts of the gods. His was a gentler muse, lulled by the breath of flutes, seeking the sequestered nooks, frolicking among the flowers, basking with the satyrs and the fauns, luxuriating in the langour of the lapping wave, titillating among the fountains, lolling in blossoms, or sipping nectar from the silver dew. Frown upon him as we may, deprecate his morals as we must, no sweeter song is treasured in the heart than that which beauty purloins from the lips of youth; and, so long as men are men and maids are maids, youth and health will succumb to Anacreon's subtle and subduing charm, or struggle to resist his soft, bewitching spell. He is a living flower among garlands that are dead. Gone is the muse from Hellas; gone are the dream and song; gone is the haunting sweetness of the lute's voluptuous lay; but while aught of Anacreon remains, their pictured memories will forever glint and glow along the golden sands of Time.

## X.

### THEOCRITUS.

Theocritus, the father of Greek pastoral poetry, and the first great artist of his kind, flourished in the first half of the third century B. C. He was born in Syracuse, and King Hiero II. was his friend. But his great patron was Ptolmey Philadelphus, King of Egypt, the founder of the Alexandrian Library. We have no further biographical data touching his career, aside from the fact that some thirty Idyls bear his name; some of these, no doubt, being spurious.

To the student of literature, Theocritus, however meager his remains, will be forever treasured as the founder of that delightful school of poesy which has enriched all the languages of civilization with its placid portrayal of country life. Theocritus was followed by two Greek pastoral poets, Bion and Moschus. But his greatest disciple in ancient times was Virgil.

In his Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres, Prof. Blair observes that Theocritus is distinguished for the simplicity of his sentiments; for the sweetness and harmony of his numbers, and for the richness of his scenery and description. "He is the original, of which Virgil is the imitator. For most of Virgil's highest beauties in his Eclogues are copies from Theocritus; in many places he has done nothing more than translate him." Theocritus followed Nature; whereas, Virgil followed Theocritus. From Virgil the bucolic motive spread to Catullus and Horace, and finally through all the languages of western Europe.

Dante, Petrarch, Giovanni and Boccaccio led the Virgilian revival in Italy in the fourteenth century, being followed in the sixteenth century by Tasso and Guarini, all of whom produced pastorals patterned after the ancient classics. In France the pastoral ideal culminated in the "Astree," a prose romance pub-



lished in the seventeenth century by d'Urife. In Spain we find its rarest triumph in the "Galatea" of Cervantes, and in Germany the pastoral reached its most perfect form in Goethe's "Hermann und Dorothea," which harks back to the simplicity and purity of Theocritus.

In England the pastoral sprang into being under the magic touch of Edmund Spenser, in the *Shepherd's Calendar*, and blossomed into the full fruition of its undying charms in the works of Fletcher, Ben Johnson and Shakespeare, and in the "Comus" and "Lycidas" of John Milton. The critics are not partial to the pastorals of Pope and Ambrose Philips, published early in the eighteenth century. In more recent times, the traces of Theocritus are readily discernible in Tennyson's "Dora" and "The Miller's Daughter." Thus has the lay of the Sicilian shepherd made its pipings audible to every ear attuned to the harmonies of nature, through all the great languages of ancient and modern times. In whatever tongue he speaks, his idyls retain their pristine freshness to the present hour. What rustic scene, for example, could be more truly drawn than this:

"Poplars and elms above their foliage spread,  
Lent a cool shade, and wav'd the breezy head;  
Below, a stream from the nymph's sacred cave,  
In free meanders led its murm'ring wave.  
In the warm sunbeams, verdant shades among,  
Shrill grasshoppers renew'd their plaintive song;  
At distance far, conceal'd in shades, alone,  
Sweet Philomela pour'd her tuneful moan;  
The lark, the goldfinch, warbled lays of love,  
And sweetly pensive coo'd the turtle-dove;  
While honey-bees, forever on the wing,  
Humm'd round the flowers, or sipt the silver spring;  
The rich, ripe season gratified the sense  
With summer's sweets, and autumn's redolence.  
Apples and pears lay strew'd in heaps around,  
And the plum's loaded branches kiss'd the ground."

In his later days Theocritus grew dissatisfied with the court of Hiero, and retired to the country, where the remainder of his life was spent in contemplation of those rural scenes which his pen has preserved with a fidelity and simplicity so often imitated, so rarely equalled, so universally admired, and forever unsurpassed. He it was who vocalized the shepherd's song and taught the rustic maid to speak the language of the heart; who tinted the wealth of nature with the wonders of human speech; and he it was who found, two thousand years before great Shakespeare's time,

"\* \* \* tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,  
Sermons in stones, and good in everything."

As James Russell Lowell so beautifully said, in his oration on the 250th anniversary of the founding of Harvard College: "The gardens of Sicily are empty now, but the bees from all climes still fetch honey from the tiny garden plot of Theocritus."

PART THREE.

GREAT ITALIAN AUTHORS

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- I. DANTE.
- II. PETRARCH.
- III. BOCCACCIO.
- IV. TASSO.
- V. ARIOSTO.
- VI. BOIARDO.
- VII. MICHELANGELO.
- VIII. MACHIAVELLI.
- IX. METASTASIO.
- X. ALFIERI.

Italy is still the privileged land of nature and humanity; and the manly pith of its great ages is neither degenerated nor dried up. Involved, by the irresistible fall of the old world, in the decay of the universal empire she had founded, no nation upon earth has withstood so long a period of deposition without debasement and dissolution. Her glory, her religion, her genius, her name, her language, her monuments and her arts, have continued to reign after the fall of her fortune. She alone has not had an age of civil darkness after her age of military dominion. She has subjected the barbarians who conquered her, to her worship, her laws, and her civilization. While profaning, they submitted to her; though conquerors, they humbly besought her for laws, manners and religion. Nearly the whole continent is nothing but an intellectual, moral and religious colony of this mother country of Europe, Asia and Africa. \* \* \* War, policy, literature, commerce, arts, navigation, manufactures, diplomacy, all emanated from Italy. Her names resemble those eternal dynasties, on which the supremacy, in every region of the human mind, has been devolved by nature, and of which such men as Sixtus V., Leo X., Cosmo, Tasso, Dante, Machiavel, Michael Angelo, Raphael, Petrarch, Galileo, Doria, and Christopher Columbus, transmit to each other, even at this day, the scepter that no other nation could snatch from their privileged race.

—Lamartine.

## I.

### DANTE.

Dante Alighieri, "father of Tuscan literature," and greatest of the Italian poets, was born in Florence, in the year 1265, and died at Ravenna in the year 1321, aged fifty-six years and four months. Aside from the romantic story of his love for Beatrice, little of his early life is known. After the marriage of Beatrice to another, and her early death, the poet resolved that if he lived he would write of her "what had never yet been written of any woman." His resolution was magnificently carried out in the *Divina Commedia*.

Dante was now past twenty-five years of age. He consoled himself by reading philosophical books, which, he says, were read by him with great difficulty. Five or six years after the death of Beatrice he married. He reared four children. In about the year 1295 Dante enrolled himself in the Guild of Physicians and Apothecaries. In the year 1300 he entered politics. Here his miseries began. He was an upright and honest citizen, and a zealous and fearless advocate of civil and religious liberty. His first public employment was upon a diplomatic mission. In the same year he was elected to one of the highest offices in the gift of the city. But Florence, like the other petty Italian states of the time, was badly disrupted by factional strife. The most thorough search of historical records has demonstrated, beyond peradventure, that Dante's public life, like his private conduct, was at all times honest and clean. Nevertheless, while he was away on public business, leaders of a rival faction seized the government; and, without arraignment, investigation or trial, proceeded to convict Dante of extortion, peculation and malversation in office, and levied against him a ruinous fine, besides decreeing banishment for two years, and perpetual disqualification from office. Dante declined to recognize the validity of this iniquitous

decree, and a second sentence was pronounced against him, ordering him to be burned alive.

Dante remained an exile for the remainder of his life. Never again did he set foot upon the soil of his native city. But his enemies were never able to capture him and carry out their infamous designs against his life. We are unable to follow the distressed and persecuted poet in his wanderings, but we know that he travelled over Italy seeking to organize expeditions for the relief and redemption of his beloved Florence from the murderous band of ruffianly marplots who had gained control of the city. He visited various cities of France. Boccaccio thinks that he visited England and studied at Oxford; but there is scant evidence of this. He finally settled at Ravenna, where he finished his immortal poem, the *Divinia Commedia*, in one hundred cantos, divided into three books, the *Inferno*, the *Purgatorio* and the *Paradiso*. The poem is not an epic, and it is not a satire. It defies classification in the ordinary categories of verse. It is the soul of Dante; as such it stands and weaves its mystic spell. The *Commedia* is published in over three hundred editions, in every modern language, and its commentators form a library. Dante was unknown to the English-reading public until about one hundred years ago, when Carey's translation was published, in 1805-6. Even Carey's version (still the most popular English translation) languished in obscurity for several years, and until 1818, when it was warmly praised by Samuel Taylor Coleridge in one of his London lectures, and as a consequence, the work sprang into immediate popularity.

Soon after his death, when the matchless dream of his undying genius was the sensation of the hour, and the world of letters was worshipping at the tomb of Dante, his countrymen began to show every honor to his memory. A public lectureship was established to expound his poem, and Boccaccio was the first lecturer. Often in the ages that have since cast their mantle of oblivion over the wicked generation which so shamefully abused their city's noblest son, the people of Florence have, without avail, sought to procure from Ravenna the ashes of the poet—seeking

the poet's ashes, when, as Lowell so aptly remarked, if they had caught the poet living they would have converted his body into cinders. Whereat we cannot but observe, with Byron (*Child Harold*, iv., St. 57) :

“Ungrateful Florence! Dante sleeps afar,  
Like Scipio, buried by the upbraiding shore.”

Whether we wander in the hopeless terrors of the *Inferno*, sense the star-lit beauties of the *Purgatorio*, or 'contemplate the serene splendors of the *Paradiso*, we must conclude that, in the whole range of literature, the vast creation of Dante is without precursor, counterpart or progeny. As his vision of heaven reflects like a mirror the supernal gleam of the gates ajar, just so surely does his dream of hell show forth the torments of the damned. There is, there was, there can be, no other of its kind. In his dark dominion Dante rules alone. He knows no partner in his hermit sway. Like a meteor shot from eternity, or as lightnings cleave the inky blackness of a storm-swept sky, his lurid genius lights in fitful flashes the clouds that cover it, and then goes thundering through the vastitudes of space, in an orbit all its own, rolling like a planet in its solitary course. In the *Inferno* we find no Peri knocking at the gates of dawn, seeking entrance to the realms of light. The black wings of his imagination are flapping at the gates of doom, or swooping like an avenging deity along the dread Plutonian shore, where Tartarean caverns re-echo a myriad groans and sighs, rumbling their deep diapason of hopeless, helpless sorrow in that dismal concavity of endless woe. At the unutterable horror of such scenes the heart sickens and revolts; and yet, drawn by the spell of a terror so subtle, so resistless, so profound and undefined, we must turn and look, and look again. And then, passing from the blighted regions of the damned, anon he soars aloft on pinions of eternal light to sing his deathless song of Paradise—

“As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,  
Swells from the vale and midway leaves the storm,  
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread  
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.”

Says Dr. Richard Garnett in his *Italian Literature*: "He moves through life a great, lonely figure, estranged from human fellowship at every point, a citizen of eternity, misplaced and ill-starred in time; too great to mingle with his age, or, by consequence, to be of much practical service to it; too embittered and austere to manifest in action the ineffable tenderness which may be clearly read in his writings; one whose friends and whose thoughts are in the other world, while he is yet more keenly alive than any other man to the realities of this; one whose greatness impressed the world from the first and whom it does not yet fully know after the study of six hundred years." They know him best who fully understand the scholastic teachings of his great contemporaries, Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus. The nature of his epic style is apparent from the *Commedia*, as Dante and Virgil enter the infernal gate:

"All hope abandon, ye who enter here!"

These words in somber color I beheld

Written upon the summit of a gate.

He led me in among the secret things;

There sighs, complaints and ululations loud

Resounded through the air without a star,

Whence I, at the beginning, wept thereat.

Languages diverse, horrible dialects,

Accents of anger, words of agony,

And voices high and hoarse, with sound of hands,

Made up a tumult that goes whirling on

Forever in that air, forever black,

Even as the sand doth when the whirlwind breathes.

It was the high prerogative of this super-spirit to pass eternal judgment on the souls of men. The audacity of the conception in its very daring is sublime. The project, lightly essayed, would have been an impious profanation. It almost savored of attempting the throne of the Infinite. Who could dare to hold



within his hand the scales of eternal justice? None—none but the proud and melancholy soul of Dante! And six hundred years of human thought have all but decreed his judgments “just and righteous altogether.” Let us view but a single one of his judgments; and let the reader answer if it be just or no:

“\* \* \* This miserable fate

Suffer the wretched souls of those who lived  
Without praise or blame, with that ill band  
Of angels mix’d, who nor rebellious proved,  
Nor yet were true to God, but for themselves  
Were only. \* \* \*

These of death

No hope may entertain; and their blind life  
So meanly passes, that all other lots  
They envy. Fame of them the world hath none,  
Nor suffers; mercy and justice scorn them both.  
Speak not of them, but look, and pass them by.”

—(“Inferno,” Carey’s Translation.)

We can go no further with him now, but must leave him, with his Virgil, here. But the reader is adjured to follow where he leads—up the holy mount of the Purgatorio, and with Beatrice to the Promised Land. For, as Dean Church says, “Dante certainly did not intend to be read only in fine passages—to be properly understood, and properly appreciated, he must be read as a whole, and studied as a whole.”

In fine, we may conclude with Macaulay, in his “Criticism on the Principal Italian Writers:

“The style of Dante is, if not his highest, his most peculiar excellence. I know nothing with which it can be compared. The noblest models of Greek composition must yield to it. \* \* \* I have heard the most eloquent statesman of the age remark that, next to Demosthenes, Dante is the writer who ought to be most attentively studied by every man who desires to attain oratorical excellence.”

## II.

### PETRARCH.

Francesco Petrarch, father of the Renaissance, was born in 1304 and died in 1374, after a career seldom or never paralleled in the literary annals of any nation. He was born at Arezzo while his father was an exile from Florence. Like so many of the Italian literati, young Petrarch was intended for the law, but his over-mastering passion for classical learning carried his talents to a higher court.

Petrarch wrote more in Latin than in Italian, and prided himself chiefly upon his "Africa," a Latin poem in hexameters, in which he celebrated the adventures of Scipio Africanus. But it is his sonnets that have shed imperishable glory upon his name. He did not invent the sonnet, but he furnished a model which has served as a pattern for all succeeding ages. In these Italian works, he established and perfected that pure and elegant Italian style which has suffered less change in the past five hundred years than it had experienced in the single century preceding him.

"Dante and Petrarch are, as it were," says Hallam (*Literature of Europe*), "the morning stars of our modern literature." After Dante Petrarch was the real creator of the Italian language. But his first great service to polite learning was the work of discovering, collating, copying and translating the manuscripts of the ancient classics, a labor to which he continuously applied himself with the most passionate ardour. He restored classical antiquity to Italy, and through Italy to the world. Heeren, the great German authority, declares that the remainder of the ancient manuscripts would have been hopelessly lost if Petrarch had not appeared when he did. He is, therefore, beyond question, the restorer of polite learning, and the genuine father of the Renaissance. He caught up anew the fires of ancient civilization, and rekindled them in the hearts of his countrymen. He brushed

the dust from the crumbling monuments of antiquity, and revealed for us the beauties of ancient art; he touched the mouldering manuscripts of a bygone age, and they poured forth their golden flood of eloquence and song into the treasure-house of modern letters; he tore aside the veil of literary darkness that had for centuries beclouded the mind of man, and disclosed to our delighted vision the sun-crowned heights of Olympus.

Petrarch had visited the seats of learning in Germany and France, and enjoyed a wider acquaintance among men of letters than any other literary man of his time. Chaucer knew him personally, and his influence upon English letters was immediate and extensive. Shakespeare mentions him in "Romeo and Juliet." In 1570 we find Ascham, in "The Scholemaster," voicing the unique complaint that the people of England had begun to hold "in more reverence the triumphes of Petrarche than the Genesis of Moses; they make more account of Tullies offices than S. Paules epistles; of a tale in Bocace than a storie of the Bible." Quite so, indeed. "These bee the enchantementes of Circes," he says, "brought out of Italie to marre mens maners in England." And old Puttenham, in "The Arte of English Poesie" declares: "In the latter end of the same king (Henry the eight) reigne, sprong up a new company of courtly makers—who having travailed into Italie, and there tasted the sweete and stately measures and stile of Dante, Arioste, and Petrarche, they greatly polished our rude and homely maner of vulgar Poesie." One of these "courtly makers" was the Earl of Surrey, whom Taine calls "the English Petrarch."

But there is no English Petrarch, and there will never be. His sonnets to Laura are as inimitable as are the sublime creations of Dante. In the crucible of his genius, the lambent flame of an undying love becomes a supernal passion, with all dross of lust or taint of grossness or sensuality forever purged away. Hallam says: "It has never again been given to man, nor will it probably be given, to dip his pen in those streams of etherial purity which have made the name of Laura immortal."

Adored throughout Italy, Petrarch was the peculiar divinity

of the Florentines. In 1540 the Academy of Florence was instituted for the sole purpose of perfecting the Tuscan language by the study of the poems of Petrarch. The critics of the period set him up as a model of literary perfection, without flaw or defect, and he was worshipped as a literary idol. Commentaries were written upon almost every word, and whole volumes upon a single sonnet.

Never was genius so amply and so spontaneously rewarded as in the case of Petrarch. He numbered among his friends and patrons the famous Colonna family, the Visconti, the Carrara family of Padua, the Correggi of Parma, king Robert of Naples and the Doge of Venice. Pope Clement VI. conferred upon him one or two sinecure benefices, and would have made him a bishop if he had taken holy orders. The same pontiff offered him the post of apostolical secretary, and the offer was renewed by Pope Innocent VI. In 1340 he was invited to both Rome and Paris to receive the laurel crown. He chose Rome, where, on Easter Sunday, 1341, he was solemnly crowned, amid the greatest possible pomp and splendor. Nothing in the entire history of Italy reflects a finer glory upon the Italian people than their voluntary adulation of the great author of the purest love-poems the world has ever known.

Much has been written upon the subject of Laura and of the nature of the poet's attachment for her. Byron asks, in the 8th stanza of the third Canto of his *Don Juan*:

"Think you, if Laura had been Petrarch's wife,  
He would have written sonnets all his life?"

But the inquiry scarcely concerns us now. The Academy of Ferrara, after full investigation, solemnly decreed the Platonic purity of Petrarch's devotion. It is highly probable that Laura, while having an actual, physical basis of fact (not being, as some have supposed, a mere figment of poetic imagination), was in the conception of Petrarch more of an ideal personage, in the nature of a feminine abstraction, like Dante's Beatrice, Surry's Geraldine, Sidney's Stella, or Tasso's Leonora,—not women, but woman in general—although each actually existed to inspire a poet's love.

Boccaccio's Maria, to be sure, must be placed in a category somewhat less Platonic. Petrarch was not a skeptic like Boccaccio, but throughout his career firmly professed his Christian faith. It is not our proper function to further judge his morals now. Enough for us the chastened note, the subdued pathos, the somber sweetness, the solemn, penitential beauty of the song he sings:

Yon nightingale, whose strain so sweetly flows,  
Mourning her ravished young or much-loved mate,  
A soothing charm o'er all the valleys throws  
And skies, with notes well tuned to her sad state.  
—(Sonnet XLIII., "To Laura in Death.")

Or this, from his "Triumph of Eternity":

Those spacious regions where our fancies roam,  
Pain'd by the past, expecting ills to come,  
In some dread moment, by the fates assigned,  
Shall pass away, nor leave a rack behind;  
And Time's revolving wheel shall lose at last  
The speed that spins the future and the past:  
And, sovereign of an undisputed throne,  
Awful eternity shall reign alone."

And thus he views, with Christian fortitude, the end of all (To Laura in Death, Canzone V., St. 6):

For death betimes is comfort, not dismay,  
And who can rightly die needs no delay.

### III.

#### BOCCACCIO.

Giovanni Boccaccio, the father of the novel, was born 1313 and died 1375. Gay, garrulous, amorous old Boccaccio, the sport of passion and the slave of lust! He can now hardly be read in unexpurgated form; he is for the most part unfit for publication at the present time, in circles where moral purity is desired; but, for all that, there can be no complete knowledge of Italian literature without at least a partial knowledge of Boccaccio. Without question, he is one of the really great figures of Tuscan literature. Some authorities, indeed, place him as the third great figure of Italian literature, outranked by none but Dante and Petrarch. The remarkable fluidity of his purling style, swift, rapid and sparkling, marks him as the creator of classic Italian prose, and his mother tongue owes its earliest model of grace and refinement to his pen.

His love affairs were as numerous as they were discreditable. But his "Fiammetta," the poetic name which he conferred upon Maria, daughter of King Robert of Naples, inspired him to write his "Filocopo," his "Ameto," and his "Fiammetta," all which were designed to celebrate her charms. He wrote many stories and poems, and a life of Dante. But his most famous work is the Decameron, a collection of one hundred tales. He imagines these stories as being related by a party of ten refugees from the plague at Florence. He also wrote a history of the plague, and likewise translated many of the Greek and Latin authors into Italian. In the labor of discovering, rescuing and translating ancient manuscripts he was almost as indefatigable as his friend Petrarch, under whose influence he fell at the age of thirty-seven. He seems thereafter to have abandoned his wayward life, and to have devoted his later energies to the purposes of a serious scholarship. Following the leadership of Petrarch he became a leader in the humanistic revival then upon its upward surge. It

was at his suggestion that Lorenzo Pilato made the first translation of Homer into Latin.

In popularity, the collection of tales in the Decameron has never been surpassed in the history of the world's literature. It has never, indeed, been equalled in popularity, if we except Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*; and, as is well known, Chaucer was deeply indebted to Boccaccio, as were Shakespeare, Moliere, Fontaine and others. It appears that Boccaccio fully repented of the errors of his youth. Upon the advice of a dying priest, he was about to retire from the world and join a monastic order, when he was dissuaded from this course by his friend Petrarch.

Boccaccio was highly honored by his admiring countrymen of Florence, and he represented his people upon many diplomatic missions. The object of one of these missions was to extend to Petrarch an official invitation to take up his residence in Florence. But the highest honor his city ever conferred upon him, and a most fitting dignity, too, was bestowed in 1373, two years before his death, when he was appointed to expound the "*Divina Commedia*" of Dante, at a salary of one hundred golden florins per annum. Had his life been spared for a few years it is not to be doubted that his lectures upon Dante would have developed into an interesting and scholarly work, vastly exceeding in value much that has been written upon this most glorious product of the middle ages. But his fame rests upon the Decameron.

"Among many views in which this epoch-making book may be regarded," says F. M. Warren, in his *History of the Novel Previous to the Sixteenth Century*, "is that of an alliance between the elegant and superfine literature of courts and the vigorous but homely literature of the people. Nobles and ladies, accustomed to far-fetched and ornate compositions like the '*Filicopo*', were made able by the '*Decameron*' to hear the same stories which amused the common people, told in a style which, too, the uneducated could appreciate and enjoy, but purged of much roughness and vulgarity and told in the only clear, forcible prose that had yet been produced. This is Boccaccio's best defense against the charge of licentiousness which has been so misconstruingly

laid against him. He markedly did not write for the purpose of stimulating the passions, but reproduced the ordinary talk of moments of relaxation, giving it the attraction of a pure and classic style." All which may be true, and to some extent is undoubtedly true. But, none the less, men make the morals of the ages in which they live, and we cannot doubt that, had Boccaccio so desired, he could, without detracting from their literary beauty, have made his tales as pure as the love-poems of Petrarch, a product of the same age that gave us the Decameron. The same age, also, gave us the matchless moral philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas. But what is here said is not designed to in anywise question the literary value of Boccaccio nor his position as not only the founder of the novel, but the greatest novelist of Italy up to the time of Alessandro Manzoni, who died in 1873, and whose "I Promessa Sposi" is doubtless better known today than any Italian book since the Divine Comedy, and remains to this day as the greatest romance of Italian prose.



IV.  
TASSO.

Torquato Tasso, the greatest epic poet of the modern ages, was born at Sorrento, Naples, in 1544, and died at the monastery of St. Onofrio, in Rome, in 1595. His father, a poet of respectable talents—and not without the temporal misfortunes which so often attend such distinction—destined young Torquato for the law. But the youthful poet, while outwardly engrossed with his legal studies, was secretly occupied with the composition of his “Rinaldo,” a romantic poem in twelve cantos, which was received with incredible applause throughout Italy. Tasso had not then attained his eighteenth year. In one of the closing stanzas of the piece, he thus alludes to his youth, and to the difficulties under which he has worked:

“Thus have I sung in battlefield and bower,  
Rinaldo’s cares, and prattled through my page,  
While other studies claim’d the irksome hour,  
In the fourth lustre of my verdant age;  
Studies from which I hoped to have the power  
The wrongs of adverse fortune to assuage;  
Ungrateful studies, whence I pine away  
Unknown to others, to myself a prey.”

Sir William Blackstone (author of the famous “Commentaries”), when he gave up literature for the law, wrote the poem, “A Lawyer’s Farewell to His Muse.” But this historical romance of Tasso’s proved to be the muse’s farewell to the law. From that time forth, young Tasso’s studies, diligently prosecuted at various schools, were wholly literary and philosophical. The dedication of his “Rinaldo” to the Cardinal d’Este, brought him to the favorable notice of the great house of Este, one of whose mem-

bers, Alphonso II., was sovereign duke of Ferrara. He soon accepted an invitation from the duke to enter his service, and proceeded to the court of Ferrara, the scene of his glory and his grief.

For some years Tasso was the chief glory of this brilliant and luxurious court. Every honor was paid him that was due to the first poet of his day. In a clime so congenial his fertile genius produced with ease. Here he brought forth his great pastoral drama, the "Aminta," a pastoral worthy of Virgil or Theocritus, and which, if he had written nothing else, would have forever enshrined his name among the world's great poets. Meanwhile he was rapidly completing the great temple of his dreams, the "Gerusalemme Liberata"—Jerusalem Delivered—the great metrical story of the Crusades. This vast work, in twenty cantos, is the master-piece of a master mind. It is pre-eminentlly the one incontestably great epic poem of the Age of Chivalry; a literary labyrinth of knightly deeds, untainted love and Christian zeal.

Tasso, of course, cannot be said to equal Homer in poetic fire; but Voltaire insists that he is superior to Homer in the choice of his subject. The gloomy grandeur of this stanza, from the fourth canto, where Satan summons his infernal band, is seldom surpassed in the whole range of epic literature:

"Its hoarse alarm the Stygian trumpet sounded  
Through the dark dwellings of the damn'd; the vast  
Tartarean caverns tremblingly rebounded,  
Blind air rebellowing to the dreary blast;  
Hell quaked with all its millions; never cast  
Th' ethereal skies a discord so profound,  
When the red lightning's vivid flash was past;  
Nor ever with such tremors rock'd the ground."

The reader will note how well the words portray the very sounds and motions described in this passage. This is decidedly Homeric, this trait being a capital feature of Homer. The introduction of Satan in the fourth canto, from which we have just quoted, is productive of exceedingly striking effects, and has been

imitated by Milton. The stories of knight-errantry, the enchantments, charms and conjuries which characterize the wild, rich fancy of the chivalric age have been much criticized in Tasso; and yet, in this regard, the chief difference between his romance and that of Homer and Virgil is simply this: Tasso's is the romance of Christianity; theirs is the romance of paganism. As compared with Virgil, Tasso is deficient in tenderness; yet we search Virgil in vain for a sweeter picture of rustic placidity than this, in the seventh canto, when Erminia is awakened in her shepherds' retreat:

"She slept, till in her dreaming ear the bowers  
Whisper'd, the gay birds warbled of the dawn;  
The river roar'd; the winds to the young flowers  
Made love; the blithe bee wound its dulcet horn:  
Roused by the mirth and melodies of morn,  
Her languid eyes she opens, and perceives  
The huts of shepherds on the lonely lawn;  
While seeming voices, 'twixt the waves and leaves,  
Call back her scatter'd thoughts, again she sighs and grieves."

An astute and discriminating English critic has very properly observed. "The Jerusalem is, in rank and dignity, the third regular epic poem in the world; and comes next to the *Illiad* and *Aeneid*." As Lamartine so beautifully says: "Urged by piety no less than by the muse, Tasso dreamed of a crusade of poetic genius, aspiring to equal by the glory and the sanctity of his songs, the crusades of the lance he was about to celebrate." Indeed, a primary characteristic of Tasso's genius was a deep and somber spirituality. The Italian critic, Corniani, places the prose of Tasso almost on a level with the poetry. "We find in it," he says, "dignity, rhythm, elegance, and purity without affectation, and perspicuity without vulgarity. He is never trifling or verbose, like his contemporaries of that century, but endeavors to fill every part of his discourses with meaning."

Of the seven terrible years he spent in a mad-house at Fer-

rara, one shudders to think. He was imprisoned there by order of the Duke, whose only published excuse was that he was detaining Tasso for the purpose of "curing" him of his insanity. But the real purpose of Tasso's incarceration will, in all probability, forever remain a mystery, as baffling as the motive which exiled Ovid from the court of Augustus. It is hardly possible that any alienist of even that crude age, would have recommended an underground dungeon for this purpose; yet it was in an underground cell that the Duke of Ferrara buried for seven years the most sublime genius of the age. During this unhappy period portions of the *Jerusalem* were first published, from manuscripts stolen from the poet. The growing insanity of the unhappy poet, and his romantic love of Leonora, are portrayed with great poetic beauty and spiritual charm by Goethe, in his drama "*Torquato Tasso*," wherein (Act II., Sc. 1) he makes the poet speak in this fashion of his greatest work:

"Whatever in my song doth reach the heart  
And find an echo there, I owe to one,  
And one alone! No image undefin'd  
Hover'd before my soul, approaching now  
In radiant glory to retire again.  
I have myself, with mine own eyes, beheld  
The type of every virtue, every grace;  
What I have copied thence will aye endure;  
The heroic love of Tancred to Clorinda,  
Erminia's silent and unnoticed truth,  
Sophronia's greatness and Olinda's woe;  
These are not shadows by illusion bred;  
I know they are eternal, for they are."

Finally, upon the petition of Pope Sixtus V., and others, Tasso was released, to spend the remainder of his life chiefly at Rome and Naples. Here he was the recipient of every honor that ambition could covet or genius desire. He was entertained as a guest at the Vatican. The mansions of the great were opened to

him. Wealth and honors were showered upon him. With a soul chastened by sorrow and sweetened by adversity, he continued his literary work. He was to have been crowned with the laurel crown at the capitol (the first to receive that honor since Petrarch), but before the event transpired, death sealed his honors and relieved him of his cares. He died surrounded by the monks of the monastery, and his last words were: "Into thy hands, O Lord!" He made the precepts of Christian doctrine the practice of his life; and, as one biographer observes, "the darkness of his fate had a tendency to turn his views beyond this world, as night, which hides the earth, reveals the sky."

In his later years Tasso published the "*Gerusalemme Conquistata*," greatly inferior to his other work, but he imagined it to be superior; just as Milton mistakenly preferred his "*Paradise Regained*" to the "*Paradise Lost*."

## V.

### ARIOSTO.

Ludivico Ariosto, one of the greatest names in Italian literature and one of the great poets of the world, was born at Reggio, Sept. 8, 1474, and died at Ferrara June 6, 1533. Like Petrarch, Tasso and Boccaccio, Ariosto was early destined for the law, but abandoned his irksome studies after five years of futile and misdirected effort. The untimely death of his father cast upon the shoulders of the young poet the burden of caring for a large family.

Like that of Tasso, the career of Ariosto was begun by entering the service of the House of Este. During the ten years of his service under the Cardinal d'Este, while engaged principally in diplomatic missions and military operations, he completed his master work, the *Orlando Furioso*, which will stand for all time as the great romance of the Age of Chivalry. The poem consists of about 5,000 stanzas, in forty-six cantos. Dismissed by the Cardinal, the poet cast his lot with the Cardinal's brother, the Duke of Ferrara, to whose service he devoted the remainder of his life.

In addition to his principal work, Ariosto also wrote comedies, satires, sonnets and other poems, all which, though exhibiting a high order of genius, have been so eclipsed by his great masterpiece that they are but little known. The *Orlando Furioso* has long been recognized as the greatest work of its kind in any language. Twenty-five years after Ariosto's death Bernardo Tasso, father of the immortal author of the "*Jerusalem Delivered*," and himself a poet of distinction, wrote of the tremendous popularity of Ariosto's great poem: "There is neither scholar nor artisan, boy nor girl, nor old man, who is contented with reading it only once. Do you not hear people every day singing these stanzas in the streets and in the fields? I do not believe that in the same

length of time as had passed since this poem was given to the world, that there have been printed or published or seen so many Homers or Virgils as 'Furiosos'."

But Ariosto's popularity has been by no means confined to his native land. Next to Homer, he has been the favorite poet of Europe. More than sixty editions of the *Orlando Furioso* were published in the sixteenth century. When Galileo was asked how he acquired the perspicuity and grace which so distinguished his philosophical writings, he replied: "By the continual study of Ariosto." One of the most learned critics of modern times, Henry Hallam, in his "Literature of Europe" (Vol. I., Chap. IV., Sect. II.) does not hesitate to say: "The *Orlando Furioso*, as a great single poem, has been very rarely surpassed in the living records of poetry. He must yield to three, and only three, of his predecessors. He has not the force, simplicity, and truth to nature of Homer, the exquisite style and sustained majesty of Virgil, nor the originality and boldness of Dante. The most obvious parallel is Ovid, whose *Metamorphoses*, however, are far excelled by the *Orlando Furioso*, not in fertility of invention, or variety of images and sentiments, but in purity of taste, in grace of language, and harmony of versification."

The seven satires of Ariosto were not published until after his death. They are written in the manner of Horace, whose work they fairly approximate in easy grace and Epicurean cheerfulness. Tiraboschi, an eminent Italian critic, places the satires of Ariosto at the head of all poetry of that class. His comedies, like so much of the early Italian comedy, are apparently based upon Plautus. However, when Ariosto is mentioned by critics, it is always the *Orlando Furioso* which is discussed.

For centuries there has been a controversy among Italian critics over the relative merits of Tasso and Ariosto. Each is great in his kind. But the *Jerusalem* is an epic, judged by every classic rule. The *Orlando* is not; it is simply a wonderful metrical romance, although portions of it are truly epical. To quote Mr. Hallam again: "The finest stanzas in Ariosto are fully equal to any in Tasso, but the latter has by no means so many feeble lines.

Yet his language, though never affectedly obscure, is not so pellucid, and has a certain refinement which makes us sometimes pause to perceive the meaning. Whoever reads Ariosto slowly, will probably be offended by his negligence; whoever reads Tasso quickly, will lose something of the elaborate finish of his style."

Sir Walter Scott was called "the Ariosto of the north." But he was not. Spenser is the English poet most naturally to be compared with Ariosto, for "Fierce wars and faithful loves did moralize the song" of both. But Spenser lacks the gaiety, warmth and ardor of the great Italian, although equalling him in rhetorical splendor and excelling him in morality.

In one view of the subject, the most striking feature of Ariosto is the constant shifting of style and scene. In narration and description he has never been surpassed. His variety is endless, his versatility most profuse; comic and satiric; heroic, majestic, tender, licentious—from lively to severe, his sportive imagination bounds and ripples along through his forty thousand lines, excelling in whatsoever he sees fit to attempt, always suiting his style to his subject, and always painting his moving pictures in smooth and melodious verse.

As Virgil essayed a continuation of Homer's *Illiad*, so does Ariosto assume to continue Boiardo's *Orlando Inamorato*. The subject is the many chivalric adventures of Orlando who became insane through love for Angelica. He is, however, finally restored to sanity. We quote from the 39th Canto:

"When to his former self he was restored,  
Of wiser and of manlier mind than e'er,  
From love as well was freed the enamored lord;  
And she, so gentle deemed, so fair whilere,  
And by renowned Orlando so adored  
Did but to him a worthless thing appear.  
What he through love had lost, to re-acquire  
Was his whole study, was his whole desire."

Although the *Orlando Furioso* was first published in English a few years after the death of Shakespeare, it is believed that the first really satisfactory translation was by Rose, in 1823, and this version is still the most popular among readers of English.



## VI.

### BOIARDO.

To the casual reader Boiardo is of interest chiefly because of his work having suggested to Ariosto the *Orlando Furioso*; but to the student of Italian literature he is also valuable upon his own account.

Matteo Maria Boiardo, Count of Scandiano, was born about 1430 and died in 1494. Educated at the University of Ferrara, he entered the service of Duke Borso of Ferrara, and continued in the service of his successor, Duke Ercole. Boiardo was one of the most finished scholars of his time, although Hallam holds him to be inferior in scholarship to Ariosto; at least, he thinks Ariosto more conversant with the Latin poets. He was the author of many dramas, song and other poems. He also made a translation of Herodotus into Italian.

Boiardo is known to posterity principally because of his greatest work, the "*Orlando Innamorato*," which, however, was unfinished at his death. The poem deals with the Charlemagne cycle, and details the adventures and chivalric love of Orlando for Angelica, an Oriental princess. Three editions of the poem were published within the twenty years following Boiardo's death, and within a hundred years it had passed through sixteen editions. Three books were added to the poem by Agostini, but the additions in no way equal the context of Boiardo. The poem was early translated into French, and editions now exist in all the great modern languages.

Francesco Berni, a noted Italian poet who died in 1536, who was the real perfecter of the humorous poetry of Italy, and whose manner has been so happily imitated by Byron in "*Beppo*" and "*Don Juan*," transformed Boiardo's great poem into a burlesque which has all but taken the place of the original work. In 1845 another version was brought out by Lodovico Domenichi which

was likewise more popular than the original, though vastly inferior.

Milton was familiar with the romance of Boiardo, and directly refers to it in the following beautiful lines from Book III. of his "Paradise Regained":

"Such forces met not, nor so wide a camp,  
When Agrican with all his northern powers  
Besieged Albracca, as romancers tell,  
The city of Gallaphrone, from whence to win  
The fairest of her sex, Angelica  
His daughter, sought by many prowrest knights,  
Both Paynim, and the peers of Charlemagne,  
Such and so numerous was their chivalry."

Two of the Italian critics, Peliegrini and Castelvetro, have roundly berated Ariosto for building on the foundations of Boiardo. Ariosto, indeed, appears to have harbored no other design, originally, than that of carrying forward the story as Agostini had assumed to do before him, but in far better style than Agostini was capable of employing; having written the first few cantos of the *Furioso* merely, as he said, to please and amuse his friends. The story of the *Innamorato* must be first read, if we would fully understand and appreciate the *Furioso*. But, although more pleasing and various, the inventions of Ariosto are less original than those of Boiardo.

Boiardo wrote numerous shorter poems, distinguished for their transparency and grace, but the fame of all these was so completely eclipsed by his greater work that they are now but little known. Typical of these shorter works, and second to none in its beauty, is this charming sonnet, entitled "Beautiful Gift":

Beautiful gift, and dearest pledge of love,  
    Woven by that fair hand whose gentle aid  
    Alone can heal that wound itself hath made,  
And to my wandering life a sure guide prove;  
    O dearest gift all others far above  
Curiously wrought in many-colored shade,  
Ah, why with thee has not the spirit stayed,  
    That with such tasteful skill to form thee strove?  
Why have I not that lovely hand with thee?  
    Why have I not with thee each fond desire,  
That did such passing beauty to thee give?  
    Through life thou ever shalt remain with me,  
A thousand tender sighs thou shalt inspire,  
A thousand kisses day and night receive.

## VII.

### MICHELANGELO.

Michelangelo Buonarroti (called by the old English writers Michael Angelo) was born in 1475 and died, at the age of eighty-nine, in the year 1564, after the most brilliant career in the history of art. His life truly exemplified Lavatar's definition of art as "nothing but the highest sagacity and exertion of human nature," and students of his manifold creations cannot doubt that his triple triumphs in painting, sculpture and architecture would at least have been equalled if not surpassed by the magic product of his pen if he had chosen to devote the sublime activities of his soul to verbal expression alone. Even as it was, his poems appear to have been as highly esteemed in his own life-time as were his other works of art.

Addison has remarked the great affinity between designing and poetry. Schelling says that "Architècture is frozen music;" and Longfellow notes that "The picture that approaches sculpture nearest is the best picture." Whether in painting, or music, or sculpture, or literature, or histrionic art, the highest creations of genius are but blossomings of the soul, and although their tints may vary and each bloom exhale a fragrance differing from the rest, all are grown from the same bounteous Tree of Life of which they are the fruits and flowers. Great works of art are, indeed, "separate as billows, but one as the sea;" and they adorn the firmament with their deathless beauty as so many golden suns, differing "as one star differeth from another in glory."

In any enlightened consideration of the literary work of Michelangelo we should remember, as Symonds observes, that "The love of beauty, the love of Florence, and the love of Christ, are the three main motives of his poetry." They were, indeed, the motives of his life. The following excerpt from Edgar Allen Poe's "The Poetic Principle," is peculiarly applicable to all the artistic creations of this great Florentine: "An immortal instinct,

deep within the spirit of man, is a sense of the beautiful. It is at once a consequence and an indication of his perennial existence. It is no mere appreciation of the beauty before us, but a wild effort to reach the beauty above. Inspired by an ecstatic pre-science of the glories beyond the grave, we struggle, by multi-form combinations among the things and thoughts of Time, to attain a portion of that loveliness whose very elements, perhaps, appertain to Eternity alone. \* \* \* The struggle to apprehend supernal Loveliness,—this struggle on the part of souls fittingly constituted, has given to the world all that which the world has ever been enabled at once to understand and to feel as poetic.”

Intellectually, Michelangelo was a child of Dante, whose career inspired two of his most powerful sonnets. One of these (translated by Symonds) is as follows:

From heaven his spirit came, and robed in clay  
The realms of justice and of mercy trod,  
Then rose a living man to gaze on God,  
That he might make the truth as clear as day.  
For that pure star that brightened with his ray  
The undeserving nest where I was born,  
The whole wide world would be a prize to scorn;  
None but his maker can due guerdon pay.  
I speak of Dante, whose high work remains  
Unknown, unhonored by that thankless brood,  
Who only to just men deny their wage.  
Were I but he! Born for like lingering pains,  
Against his exile coupled with his good  
I'd gladly change the world's best heritage!

Here we catch the same note of sadness that is chiselled with a perfection so exquisite and sublime in the “Pieta” in St. Peter’s, the first group in modern sculpture; the same majesty which we note in the figures of the Sistine Chapel, “the greatest piece of work ever done by painter’s hand;” and the same heroic dignity

that reposes in the stern countenance of his "Moses" (done for the mausoleum of Pope Julius II.), fittingly termed the "greatest colossal statue in modern art." Truly may it be said, in the words of Wordsworth, that the statuary of Michelangelo was but "the marble index of a mind forever voyaging through strange seas of thought, alone."

He gave the last years of his life chiefly to architecture, planning many buildings, in both Florence and Rome, besides the fortifications of Rome. He had previously been superintendent of the fortifications at Florence. In 1546 or 1547 he was appointed chief architect of St. Peter's, to which task he devoted the last eighteen years of his life. The vast dome of St. Peter's, the noblest work of its kind in existence, is his design. For his work upon St. Peter's he refused to accept any compensation whatever, deeming the task a Christian privilege and a religious duty. It was this mighty performance which, in part, prompted Emerson to write:

"The hand that rounded Peter's dome  
And groined the aisles of Christian Rome,  
Wrought in a sad sincerity:  
Himself from God he could not free;  
He builded better than he knew;  
The conscious stone to beauty grew."

Of his three hundred and fifty figures in the Sistine Chapel, Sidney Colvin writes: "His sublimity, often in excess of the occasion, is here no more than equal to it; moreover, it is combined with the noblest elements of grace, even of tenderness. Whatever the soul of this great Florentine, the spiritual heir of Dante, with Christianity of the Middle Age not shaken in his mind, but expanded and transcendentalized by the knowledge and love of Plato—whatever the soul of such a man, full of suppressed tenderness and righteous indignation, and of anxious questionings of coming fate, could conceive, that Michelangelo has expressed or shadowed forth in this great and significant scheme of paintings."

Although his genius was of astonishing spontaneity, he attained his vast perfections by close application to his work. "Trifles make perfection," he said, "but perfection is no trifle." When he was eighty years of age he was discovered by Cardinal Farnese, gazing raptly upon the ruins of the Coliseum, and saying, "I yet go to school, that I may learn something." The intensity of his labor is indicated in a sonnet to Giovanni da Pistoja, wherein he says, half humorously, of his work in the Sistine Chapel:

Crosswise I bend me like a Syrian bow:

Whence false and quaint, I know,

Must be the fruit of squinting brain and eye;

For ill can aim the gun that bends awry.

Come then, Giovanni, try

To succor my dead pictures and my fame;

Since foul I fare, and painting is my shame.

Nearly all of his sonnets are addressed to friends. Some of the best, however, are upon religious subjects. Michelangelo was never married. A priest once asked him why. "I have only too much of a wife in this art of mine," he replied. "She has always kept me struggling on. My children will be the works I leave behind me. Even though they are worth naught, I shall live awhile in them." And live he shall, till Time shall be no more! His love for Vittoria Colonna, beautiful and touching, as we learn from the sonnets, was purely Platonic in character. A famous painting by Hermann Schneider shows the inspired Florentine, standing beside his statue of Moses, reading his sonnets to the woman he loved. To her he addressed many of his most beautiful verses, and after she died his mournful expressions are said to equal some of the sonnets of Petrarch "To Laura in Death." Like that of Petrarch, the love of Michelangelo is not of earthly kind; for, as he writes:

Love fits the soul with wings, and bids her win

Her flight aloft nor e'er to earth decline;

'Tis the first step that leads her to the shrine

Of Him who slakes the thirst that burns within.

## VIII.

### MACHIAVELLI.

In his lecture on "Historical Writing" Dr. Blair remarks that "the country in Europe where the historical genius has shone forth with most luster, beyond doubt, is Italy." Beyond question, likewise, the first historian of Italy in the modern age, is Niccolo Machiavelli (born 1469, died 1527); and no writer, with the exception of Montaigne, exerted so great an influence upon the age which followed him.

Machiavelli undoubtedly ranks at the head of the prose writers of Italy. Taine, the French critic, calls him "the Thucydides of his age." His dramas, "Mandragola" and "Clitia," bear a striking resemblance to the Athenian comedies, and are ranked above those of Ariosto. His "Belphegor" is a masterpiece of its kind. His "History of Florence" is the first great historical work of modern times, is the greatest historical work produced during the age in which he lived, and clearly establishes his title as the father of modern historical writing. This work has taken its place among the historical classics of the world. Throughout all his works, the style of Machiavelli is distinguished for simplicity, clearness and strength.

But, aside from his history, the fame of Machiavelli rests almost solely upon "The Prince," a treatise on practical politics, which he has reduced to a science—and a very unpopular science, too. But, to fully understand his political theories, one should read "The Prince" and the "Discourses on Livy" together. Speaking of the first of these works, Hallam says: "Without palliating the worst passages, it may be said that few books have been more misrepresented." The same critic continues: "His crime, in the eyes of the world, was to have cast away the veil of hypocrisy, the profession of a religious adherence to maxims which at the same time were violated." In other words, Machiavelli would



have been more popular had he advocated the throttling of weaker peoples under the high-sounding phrase of "self-determination," or preached absolutism under the guise of freedom! But Machiavelli was no hypocrite, and one need not be a monarchist to accord credit him with the virtue of candor. He reasoned out a plan for the establishment of a powerful Italian state. His dream was of a united Italy. He knew that this ideal could never be attained by the multitude of insignificant states then existing. And history has since vindicated his judgment in this regard. Italy remained the prey of every foreign foe until it was united under a monarchical form of government. No one will contend that a monarchical form of government is necessarily the best possible government. It may, indeed, be the very worst. Of this fact, historical illustrations are numerous. One can pay too much for political power. But, considering the needs and wants of a particular people at a particular time, a strongly centralized state may be, while not ideal, yet the most practicable for achieving the ends desired. Whether a monarchy be desirable or not must depend upon the ideals and purposes of the people governed. Every people has the right to choose its own form of government. Solon of Athens, greatest of the Seven Wise men of Greece, admitted that his Athenian constitution was not the best possible, but justified it upon the theory that it was the best which the people would receive. A monarchy may be desirable from the viewpoint of expediency, and still be wrong as a matter of principle. Machiavelli does not advise a tyrannical form of government. He recommends no such thing. He does state that the love of the people is a better security for a ruler than any fortress.

Machiavelli does not write, like Dr. Francis Lieber, upon "Political Ethics." In "The Prince" he is not discussing ethics at all. He is simply discussing the means to an end, and that end was a united Italy. It is matter of surprise that Machiavelli's "Prince" has been so misconstrued by so discriminating a scholar as Andrew Dickson White, who said, in his speech on Grotius, delivered at the peace conference at The Hague, in 1899:

"The spirit which most thoroughly permeated the whole

world, whether in war or peace, when Grotius wrote, was the spirit of Machiavelli—unmoral, immoral. It had been dominant for more than a hundred years. To measure the service rendered by the theory of Grotius, we have only to compare Machiavelli's 'Prince,' with Grotius's 'De Jure Belli ac Pacis.' \* \* \* From his own conception of the attitude of the Divine Mind toward all the falsities of his time grew a theory of international morals which supplanted the principles of Machiavelli."

Dr. White simply failed to grasp the intense nationalism of the remarkable Italian, as it was grasped by the great American lawyer and patriot, Rufus Choate, "the Erskine of America", when in his address on "American Nationality," delivered at Boston on July 4, 1858, he asked: "What else formed the secret of the brief spell of Rienzi's power, and burned and sparkled in the poetry and rhetoric of his friend Petrarch, and soothed the dark hour of the grander soul of Machiavelli, loathing that Italy, and recalling that other day when 'eight hundred thousand men sprang to arms at the rumor of a Gallic invasion'?" Choate understood Machiavelli; where as White has only voiced the popular misconception. Thus Butler in his "Hudibras" writes:

"Nick Machiavel had ne'er a trick,

Though he gave his name to our Old Nick."

And note how Shakespeare falls afoul of history: In I. Henry VI., York speaks of Alencon, "that notorious Machiavel;" and in III. Henry VI., Gloucester speaks of "the murderous Machiavel." To fully grasp the humor of this anachronism we should remember that Henry VI. died exactly ninety-eight years before Machiavelli was born. It requires a pretty bad reputation, indeed, to precede one's birth a hundred years.

We have said that "The Prince" should be read with Machiavelli's "Discourses on Livy." The observation is reiterated. The "Discourses" are the more valuable of the two dissertations, and the latter serve, in great measure, to tone down the asperities of the former; although Macaulay, apparently, finds no good in either. The "Discourses" comprise three books, of 143 chapters. In this treatise, the greatest of its kind since Aristotle, the au-

thor founded a school of philosophical politics, and prepared the way for Bodin and Montesquieu in France, Lord Bacon and John Locke in England, and Francis Lieber in America.

Machiavelli was a statesman, a diplomat, a political philosopher and a practical politician. He was always honest and was always poor. The evil he is said to have voiced is often referred to by those who have never read him—but it is seldom or never quoted. Let us quote some of the good in Machiavelli. To those who seek political honors only for selfish ends, we commend this axiom, from the "Discourses" (III., 38): "For titles do not reflect honor on men, but rather men on their titles"—*Perche non i titoli illustrano gli uomini, ma gli uomini i titoli!* That is not immoral; nor is it "unmoral"; nor are these two phrases, from the same source:

"There should be many judges; for few will always do the will of few."

"For as laws are necessary that good manners may be preserved, so there is need of good manners, that laws may be maintained." And here is another Machiavellian maxim which all politicians will do well to heed:

"Brains are of three generations, those that understand of themselves, those that understand when another shows them, and those that understand neither of themselves nor by the showing of others."

## IX.

### METASTASIO.

Pietro Metastasio was born at Rome January 13, 1698, and died at Vienna April 12, 1782. He is still one of the most popular poets of Italy. Metastasio (whose family name was Trapassi), was of obscure parentage, but his genius early atoned for his humble birth. His youthful talents drew the attention of Gravina, the jurisconsult, who thenceforth assumed responsibility for his education. Gravina was devoted to the Greek drama, and soon communicated his literary passion to the willing mind of his pupil. Never was the seed of poesy cast upon more fecund soil.

At the age of twenty-six Metastasio produced one of his most famous dramas, "*La Dione abbandonata*," which brought him to the notice of cultured Europe. Four years later, at the age of thirty, he was appointed to the office of "court poet" at Vienna. His fame throughout Europe was now established. His "*La Dione*," "*Il Catone*" and "*Il Siroe*" were known in every center of art and literature. While at Vienna he produced "*Giuseppe riconosciuto*," "*Il Demofonte*," and "*Olimpiade*." The melodramas "*Clemenza di Tito*" and "*Attilio Regolo*," are among the best of his works.

Metastasio wrote sixty-three dramas and forty-eight cantatas, besides numerous elegies, canzonette, sonnets and translations. His works have been translated into many languages, and frequently set to music by celebrated composers, his words lending themselves most readily to operatic uses. The style of his dramas is musical in a marked degree, combining with great beauty of sentiment the facile charms of lyrical grace and elegance. The closeness and rapidity of his dialogue bear a strong resemblance to the classical Greek tragedy. The constant change of incident, the broken dialogue, the rapid expressions of passion, are suggestive of the style of Guarini's "*Pastor Fido*," which, in turn, harks back to the "*Aminta*" of Tasso, who drew his pictures

directly from the classic models of Ovid, Virgil and Theocritus. Editions of his works have been published at Florence, Turin, Genoa, Mantua, and Paris.

In 1690 Giovanni Crescimbeni and Giovanni Vincenzo Gravina founded in Rome an academy called the Arcadia. Its purpose was to promote greater naturalness of expression in poetic forms. The Academy failed, but it did bring forth some good verse, written in its three manners. In the first manner the sonnet and the madrigal were cultivated; in the second, that of love lyrics; in the third, that of the occasional poem. Metastasio was the most distinguished of all who shared in this movement. He began his career as a lyric poet of the second Arcadian manner. However, he is now remembered only for his operatic dramas, "masterpieces of a time when it was still considered necessary that the libretto of an opera should be a work of art."

While Metastasio, as a whole, is little known in English, excerpts from his plays have, because of their good sense and feeling, surmounted the barriers of all languages, and are known in every land and clime. For example, many who have had no opportunity to read the "*Giuseppe riconosciuto*," are familiar with this quotation from the play: "The canker which the trunk conceals is revealed by the leaves, the fruit or the flower"—a truth so sound as to become an axiom, and so poetically expressed that it cannot be forgotten. And this, from the same great drama: "If our inward griefs were seen written on our brow, how many would be pitied who now are envied!" Let him say it in the style and idiom so peculiarly his own:

Se a ciascun l' interno affanno  
Si leggesse in fronte Scritto,  
Quanti mai, che invidia fanno,  
Ci farebbero pietà!

In another of his greater works, "*La Clemenza di Tito*," we find this noble sentiment: "To take away life is a power which the vilest of the earth have in common; to give it belongs to gods and kings alone." Another of his phrases that has crept around

the world is the following, from "Il Trionfo di Clelia": "Know that the slender shrub which is seen to bend, conquers when it yields to the storm." Still another characteristic phrase, illustrating the author's pastoral elegance, is the following, from the "Alcide al Bivio": "That water which falls from some Alpine height is dashed, broken, and will murmur loudly, but grows limpid by its fall." In this sentence, as in others, we may better grasp the rapid movement, the short measure and the lilting music of Metastasio's operatic style, by viewing it in his native Italian:

Quell' onda, che ruina  
Dalla pendice alpina,  
Balza, si frange, a mormora  
Ma limpida si fa.

## X.

### ALFIERI.

According to Dr. Frederic Taber Cooper, Vittorio Alfieri (born 1749, died 1803) was the most important of the Italian dramatic poets. Matthew Arnold said that he was "a noble-minded, deeply-interested man, but a monotonous poet." There is, indeed, in all his works, an almost total absence of the rich coloring, the golden glow and Tuscan softness of classic Italian speech. He studied assiduously to prune his style, almost to the point of harshness. His dramas are erected upon the classical models, and in them we sometimes catch a distant echo of the thundering harp of Aeschylus.

It was his thought that the theatre should be "a school in which men might learn to be free, brave and generous; inspired by true virtue, full of love for their country, and in all their passions enthusiastic, upright and magnanimous." Such he sought to make it. With him the love of freedom was a passion. His dream, like that of Petrarch and Machiavelli, was of a united Italy. But he hated king-craft in all its forms. His work bore fruit. No writer did more to achieve Italian unity. As Gioberti says, "the revival of civil order throughout the peninsula, the creation of a laic Italy, is due to Vittorio Alfieri, who, like a new Dante, was the true secularizer of the spirit of the Italian people, and gave to it that strong impulse which still lives and bears fruit."

When we think of Alfieri, observes another Italian critic, we must bring ourselves back to the age in which he lived. "The regeneration of Italian character," says Mariotti, "was yet merely intellectual and individual, and Alfieri, was born from that class which was the last to feel the redeeming influence. Penetrated with the utter impossibility of distinguishing himself by immediate action, he was forced to throw himself on the last resources

of literature. He had exalted ideas of its duties and influence; he had exalted notions of the dignity of man:—an ardent, though a vague and exaggerated love of liberty, and of the manly virtues which it is wont to foster. He invaded the stage. He wished to effect upon his contemporaries that revolution which his own soul had undergone. He wished to wake them from their long lethargy of servitude; to see them thinking, willing, striving, resisting.” Souls so obsessed with the spirit of liberty are not born to die.

Alfieri published twenty-one tragedies, six comedies, one “tramelogedia” (a name invented by himself, and denoting a kind of tragi-comedy), one epic poem in four cantos, many lyrical poems, numerous sonnets and odes, and sixteen satires, besides poetical translations of Virgil and Terence, and parts of Aristophanes, Euripides, Sophocles and Aeschylus. He also wrote his autobiography, a work of remarkable excellence. His “Misogallo,” a memorial of his fierce hatred of France, was published after his death.

The inspiration of Alfieri is political rather than poetic. His more powerful works are all designed to show that the best government is one founded upon the consent of the governed. His hatred of arbitrary power was almost sublime in its intensity. The dedications of some of his dramas are as remarkable as anything contained in the plays. “The First Brutus” was dedicated to George Washington, then in a few months to become the first president of the United States. It reads as follows:

“The name of the Deliverer of America alone can stand in the title page of the tragedy of the Deliverer of Rome.—To you, most excellent and most rare Citizen, I dedicate that; without first hinting at even a part of the so many praises due to yourself, which I now deem all comprehended in the sole mention of your name. Nor can this my slight allusion appear to you contaminated by adulation; since, not knowing you by person, and living disjoined from you by the immense ocean, we have but too emphatically nothing in common between us but the love of glory. Happy are you, who have been able to build your glory



on the sublime and eternal basis of love to your country, demonstrated by actions. I, though not born free, yet having abandoned in time my Lares, and for no other reason than that I might be able to write loftily of Liberty—I hope by this means at least to have proved what might have been my love of country, if I had indeed fortunately belonged to one that deserved the name. In this single respect, I do not think myself wholly unworthy to mingle my name with yours.”

The dedication of his “Agis” was to Charles I. of England—or, rather, to the shade of that unfortunate prince—and in it he excoriates the British monarch most unmercifully.

A fair specimen of his stern and simple style is the following excerpt from “The First Brutus,” where the body of the murdered Lucretia is brought into the Forum:

“Brutus.—Then listen now to Brutus. The same dagger

Which from her dying side he lately drew,  
Brutus now lifts; and to all Rome he swears  
That which first on her very dying form  
He swore already.—While I wear a sword,  
While vital air I breathe, in Rome henceforth  
No Tarquin e’er shall put his foot—I swear it;  
Nor the abominable name of king,  
Nor the authority, shall any man  
Ever again possess.—May the just gods  
Annihilate him here, if Brutus is not  
Lofty and true of heart!—Further I swear,  
Many as are the inhabitants of Rome,  
To make them equal, free, and citizens;  
Myself a citizen and nothing more.  
The laws alone shall have authority,  
And I will be the first to yield them homage.”

Noble sentiments these, and nobly expressed. If lacking in poetic beauty, they at least lack nothing in patriotic fervor. But

beauty Alfieri does possess, and that, too, in a high degree; but it is the statuesque beauty of cold marble, graceful in repose; his lofty ideals, devoid of ornament, rigid and unbending as the sculptor's stone. In his essay on Lord Byron, Macaulay draws a parallel between Alfieri and Cowper. "In their hatred of meretricious ornament," says he, "and of what Cowper calls 'creamy smoothness,' they erred on the opposite side. Their style was too austere, their versification too harsh. ~ ~ ~ The intrinsic value of their poems is considerable. But the example which they set of mutiny against an absurd system was invaluable. The part which they performed was rather that of Moses than that of Joshua. They opened the house of bondage; but they did not enter the promised land."

In Florence Alfieri met the Countess of Albany, wife of Charles Edward Stewart, the British Pretender, and won from Charles the heart of his queen. The infatuation was mutual, and after the death of the Pretender, she lived with Alfieri, until his death. His ashes, and those of the woman he loved, now repose in the church of Santa Croce, in Florence, between the tombs of Michelangelo and Machiavelli.

PART FOUR.

GREAT SPANISH AND  
PORTUGUESE AUTHORS

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- I. LOPE DE VEGA
- II. CERVANTES
- III. CAMOENS
- IV. QUEVEDO
- V. THE ARGENSOLAS
- VI. VILLEGAS
- VII. MONTALVO
- VIII. GUILLEN DE CASTRO
- IX. VICENTE
- X. CALDERON

In no modern society \* \* \* has there been so great a number of men eminent at once in literature and in the pursuits of active life, as Spain produced during the sixteenth century. Almost every distinguished writer was also distinguished as a soldier or a politician. Boscan bore arms with high reputation. Garcilaso de Vega, the author of the sweetest and most graceful pastoral poem of modern times, after a short but splendid military career, fell sword in hand at the head of a storming party. Alonzo de Ercilla bore a conspicuous part in the war of Arauco which he afterwards celebrated in one of the best heroic poems that Spain has produced. Hurtado de Mendoza, whose poems have been compared to those of Horace, and whose charming little novel is evidently the model of *Gil Blas*, has been handed down to us by history as one of the sternest of those iron proconsuls who were employed by the House of Austria to crush the lingering public spirit of Italy. Lope sailed in the Armada; Cervantes was wounded at Lepanto.

—Macaulay.

## I.

### LOPE DE VEGA.

Lope Felix de Vega Carpio (born 1562, died 1635) was in many respects the most splendid figure of the Golden Age of Spanish literature. In the fecundity of his literary powers he surpasses every dramatic poet in the world's history. He is noted for the prodigal abundance of his overflowing fancy, for his phenomenally rich imagination, and for an almost inconceivable exuberance of invention. He exceeded in popularity any writer in the Spanish language, and his fame has been equalled by few of any age or country.

He was born at Madrid, and was educated there, at the Imperial College, and at the University of Alcala. Montalvan states that he could read both Latin and Spanish at the age of five. He began writing verses in early childhood. At fifteen he was in the army serving as a soldier against the Portugese. Later he served in the Spanish Armada. Upon the defeat of the Armada he returned to Spain and wrote his "La Dragontea," in epic form, devoted largely to a fierce denunciation of Sir Francis Drake. While with the Armada he wrote the greater part of his "Hermosura de Angelica," an attempted continuation of Ariosto's "Orlando Furioso," in which he vainly sought to vie with the great Italian. His poem contains eleven thousand lines, divided into twenty cantos. In nowise deterred by this failure, he wrote his "Divine Triumphs," in imitation of Petrarch, and again he failed. His next attempt to outdo Italian genius was in his "Jerusalem Conquered," a poem of 22,000 verses, in twenty books, in which he sought to equal or surpass the monumental work of Tasso, but again he failed. Indeed, none of his more ambitious poetical works are particularly happy. In 1630 he published "The Laurel of Apollo," a poem upon the order of Cervantes' "The Journey to Parnassus," in which he records the honors of nearly three hun-

dred Spanish poets. This poem contains about seven thousand verses, and is distinctly disappointing.

Lope de Vega's best poetry is to be found in some of the occasional sonnets, ballads and lyrics which are scattered throughout his works. Thus, in "The Shepherds of Bethlehem," in five books, we find these rare and dainty lines in a lullaby sung by the Madonna to her child, sleeping beneath the palms, and they are as exquisite, colorful and tender as a painting by Murillo:

Holy angels and blest,  
Through these palms as ye sweep,  
Hold their branches at rest,  
For my babe is asleep.

And ye Bethlehem palm-trees,  
As stormy winds rush  
In tempest and fury,  
Your angry noise hush;—  
Move gently, move gently,  
Restrain your wild sweep;  
Hold your branches at rest,—  
My babe is asleep.

Here is genuine lyrical art. Another specimen, in a different strain, but with the same soulful touch, is the following from "Tome Burguillos," translated by Longfellow:

How oft my guardian angel gently cried,  
"Soul from thy casement look, and thou shalt see  
How He persists to knock and wait for thee!"  
And, O! how often to that voice of sorrow,  
"To-morrow we will open," I replied;  
And when the morrow came I answered still,  
"To-morrow."

But it was in the field of dramatic art that Lope de Vega found his most congenial work, and here his talents shone with undimmed splendor during the greater part of his long and active life. The number of his plays cannot now be certainly determined, but it is known to exceed 1,500, and is probably nearer 2,000, in addition to several hundred autos or one-act religious plays. His plays may be grouped in three classes: (1) Spiritual plays, including autos, and "Mystery" and "Morality" plays; (2) heroic and historical comedies and tragedies of Spanish life and history, and dramas upon classical subjects; and (3) dramas of every-day life, the famous "cloak and sword" pieces—*capa y espada*.

Bouterwek, one of the great German authorities on Spanish literature, says: "Arithmetical calculations have been employed in order to arrive at a just estimate of Lope de Vega's facility in poetic composition. According to his own testimony, he wrote, on an average, five sheets a day. It has therefore been computed that the number of sheets he composed during his life must have amounted to 133,225; and that, allowing for the deduction of a small portion of prose, Lope de Vega must have written upward of 21,300,000 verses. Nature would have over-stepped her bounds and produced the miraculous, had Lope de Vega, along with this rapidity of invention, attained perfection in any department of literature."

In his very interesting biography of Lope de Vega, Lord Holland observes: "The most singular circumstance attending his verse is the frequency and difficulty of the tasks he imposes on himself. At every step we meet with acrostics, echoes and compositions of that perverted and laborious kind, from attempting which another author would be deterred by the trouble of the undertaking, if not by the little real merit attending the achievement. \* \* \* But Lope made a parade of his power over the vocabulary; he was not contented with displaying the various order in which he could dispose the syllables and marshal the rhymes of his language, but he also prided himself upon the celerity with which he brought them to go through the most whimsical but the most difficult evolutions. He seems to have been partial to

difficulties for the gratification of surmounting them."

Cervantes calls him "a prodigy of nature." Many times he was known to write an entire drama within the space of twenty-four hours. Not less astounding than the prodigious volume of his work is the amazing complexity of his plots. He delights in leading his characters through the most intricate mazes of intrigue, flanked by counter-plots and under-plots in endless variety. His dramatic style is fresh, forceful and pleasing and his bewildering ingenuity is a charm that never fails. Ticknor, in his *History of Spanish Literature*, says that the droll, the variously witty gracioso, the full-blown parody of the heroic characters of the play, the dramatic picaro, is solely the creation of Lope de Vega. He gave it to the Spanish stage, thence it passed to the French, and then to all the other theatres of modern times. He was likewise the first to accord to woman her proper place in the drama. "Hitherto the woman had been allotted a secondary and incidental part, ludicrous in the comedies and skits, sentimental in the set piece. Lope, the expert in gallantry, in manners, in observation, placed her in her true setting as an ideal, as the mainspring of dramatic motive and of chivalrous conduct."

Lope de Vega ignored the classical dramatic unities, and often wrote in utter defiance of all the rules of dramatic art. "When I am going to write a play," he says, "I lock up all precepts, and cast Terence and Plautus out of my study, lest they should cry out against me, as truth is wont to do, even from such dumb volumes; for I write according to the art invented by those who sought the applause of the multitude, whom it is but just to humor in their folly, since it is they who pay for it." He says that he wrote only six plays that did not "gravely offend against the rules." He does not seek to inculcate any general program of morality, but merely depicts manners as he finds them. He does not seek to elevate the popular taste, but merely caters to it. "Keep the explanation of the story doubtful till the last scene," he advises; "for, as soon as the public know how it will end, they turn their faces to the door and their backs to the stage." Lope knew his audience.



Lope de Vega is especially felicitous in some of his lighter pieces, as in "El Azero de Madrid," from which Moliere afterward borrowed his "Medecin Malgre Lui." Lope's portrayal of the old Spanish duenna, as she accompanies her ward from church, and attempts to prevent her speaking to her waiting lover, is characteristic:

Theodora: Show more of gentleness and modesty;—  
Of gentleness in walking quietly,  
Of modesty in looking only down  
Upon the earth you tread.

Belisa: 'Tis what I do.

Theodora: What? When you're looking straight toward  
that man?

Belisa: Did you not bid me look upon the earth?  
And what is he but just a bit of it?

Theodora: I said the earth whereon you tread, my niece.

Belisa: But that whereon I tread is hidden quite  
With my own petticoat and walking dress.

Theodora: Words such as these become no well bred maid.  
But, by your mother's blessed memory,  
I'll put an end to all your pretty tricks;—  
What? You look back at him again?

Belisa: Who? I?

Theodora: Yes, you;—and make him secret signs besides.

Belisa: Not I. 'Tis only that you troubled me  
With teasing questions and perverse replies,  
So that I stumbled, and looked round to see  
Who would prevent my fall.

And so the dialogue proceeds in its airy flippancy and frolicsome humor—always Castilian, and always portraying perfectly to delighted audiences the manners of the time.

After the death of his first wife, Lope de Vega married again. Upon the death of his second wife he entered the priesthood, and became an officer of the Spanish Inquisition. But he did not cease writing. When the theatre was suppressed by royal order, Lope resumed his early practice of writing morality and religious dramas. He was idolized by the Spanish populace, and when he died the ceremonies attending his obsequies occupied nine days.

No man of letters was ever better paid for his work than was Lope de Vega. Montalvan says that he received for his plays eighty thousand ducats. Besides other benefactions, the Duke of Sessa alone gave him, at various times, twenty-four thousand ducats, and a sinecure of three hundred more per annum. But Lope was prodigal toward his friends, was charitable to a fault, and was almost penniless when he died.

## II.

### CERVANTES.

Fifteen years before Lope de Vega first saw the light, there was born, at Alcala de Henares, in October, 1547, the greatest literary genius of the Spanish race, Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, a victim of adversity, the butt of sorrow and the child of woe; but who for all that, as Carlyle said, was the author of "our joy-fullest modern book," and, as Moore said of Sheridan,

"Whose humor, as gay as the fire-fly's light,  
Play'd round every subject, and shone as it play'd;—  
Whose wit in the combat as gentle, as bright,  
Ne'er carried a heart-stain away on its blade."

Cervantes was among the manliest, the kindest and gentlest of men. Whether we see him in fierce battle with the Turks in the great sea-fight of Lepanto, for the greater glory of God and exaltation of Spain; or behold his stricken form, sorely wounded and maimed for life, languishing in one of the crude military hospitals of that age; or follow him in his five terrible years of Moorish slavery in Algiers; or view him through the bars of a Spanish jail, undergoing sentence for another's fault; always and everywhere we find him stout of heart, magnanimous and true, without taint of bitterness in his soul, and bravely smiling through his tears.

In 1584, at the age of thirty-seven, and immediately following the publication of his "Galatea,"—written, it is said, to win favor in the eyes of the woman he loved—he was married to a young lady of good family, but who, like Cervantes, was poor, and who faithfully shared his hardships during the remainder of his life. Soon afterward he turned to authorship for a livelihood, and devoted his talents to the stage. But his dramatic work, as

a whole, was far from satisfactory, and his labors brought small financial return. Even the names of several of his plays are lost. The best play of Cervantes is his "Numancia," a tragedy founded upon the fate of Numantia, whose four thousand men had resisted the onslaught of eighty thousand Roman troops. The town was reduced by famine, and when the Romans entered, not a single Numantian was found alive. This play has elicited praise from A. W. von Schlegel, Shelly and Goethe. Bouterwek affirms that it justifies the opinion that, in different circumstances, Cervantes might have been the Aeschylus of Spain.

Forced by scant financial success to abandon the drama, Cervantes now repaired to Seville, to engage in commercial pursuits, but with indifferent success. For a time he collected revenues for the government, but owing to the default of another he was convicted and imprisoned because of a shortage in his accounts. He then engaged to collect the rents for a monastery in La Mancha, but the debtors not only declined payment but threw him into jail. Here, as tradition has it, he began his immortal story of Don Quixote. Next we find him in Valladolid, where, a stranger having been killed near his dwelling, he was placed in prison pending the investigation. But in the midst of all his struggles and privations he was able to continue his great work, and the First Part of his Don Quixote, licensed in 1604 at Valladolid, was published at Madrid in 1605. It was his first genuine literary success, and he was now fifty-eight years of age. Returning to Madrid, he published his twelve "Moral Tales", which have always been favorites in Spain, but are little known abroad. In literary grace and style they probably surpass Don Quixote, but are not its equal as works of invention. In 1614 he published his "Journey to Parnassus," after the manner of the Italian satire of the same name by Cesare Caporali. But the poem is almost as worthless as the one in the same strain by Lope de Vega. At its close he appends a humorous dialogue attacking the actors who refused to present his dramas.

Cervantes now renewed his efforts at the drama. He succeeded no better than before. In 1615, ten years after the publi-

cation of the First Part, he published the Second Part of his *Don Quixote*. Failing health now added its burdens to those of poverty. Death was drawing near. But he had faced it on many a bloody field. He did not quail before it now. He met it smiling, and unafraid. Realizing that his end was fast approaching, he rushed his romance of "*Persiles and Sigismunda*" to completion, as a last offering to the Count de Lemos, who had befriended him. "And so," he concludes in the preface to his last work, "farewell to jesting, farewell my merry humors, farewell my gay friends, for I feel that I am dying, and have no desire but soon to see you happy in the other life."

On April 2, 1616, he entered the order of the Franciscan friars. On April 18th he received the sacrament of extreme unction. The next day he wrote a dedication of his last work, "marked, to an extraordinary degree," as one critic says, "with his natural humor, and with the solemn thoughts that became his situation." On April 23, 1616, this brave and blithesome spirit passed away—on the same day that Shakespeare died, if the English and Spanish calendars were the same.

In 1835 a bronze statue of Cervantes was placed in the Plaza del Estamento at Madrid. But more lasting than bronze is the monument which he has erected to the splendor of his own genius and the glory of Spanish letters, in his narrative of the adventures of the Sorrowful Knight of La Mancha, the most singular book of humor that the world has ever known. The "*Don Quixote*" is wholly unique. "The most experienced and fastidious judges," says Macaulay, "are amazed at the perfection of that art which extracts unextinguishable laughter from the greatest of human calamities without once violating the reverence due to it; at that discriminating delicacy of touch which makes a character exquisitely ridiculous without impairing its worth, its grace, or its dignity."

"Cervantes, Shakespeare and Goethe form the triumvirate of poets who in the three great divisions of poetry have achieved the greatest success," says Heinrich Heine. Henry Hallam says that *Don Quixote* "is to Europe in general what Ariosto is to Italy and Shakespeare to England; the one book to which the slightest allu-

sions may be made without affectation, but not missed without discredit." "Numerous translations," he adds, "and countless editions of them, in every language, bespeak its adaptation to mankind; no critic has been paradoxical enough to withhold his admiration, no reader has ventured to confess a want of relish for that in which the young and old, in every climate, have, age after age, taken delight."

M. Sismondi. Prof. Bouterwek and Walter Savage Landor are among those critics who take Don Quixote seriously. There are always those who profess to discover in the works of genius some hidden motive, some occult purpose, some subcutaneous meaning. But we do not see why Cervantes may not be taken at his word. He says he "had no other desire than to render abhorred of men the false and absurd stories contained in books of chivalry." Certainly there was ample need of this reform. Spanish love of chivalric romance amounted to an obsession, among all classes. In 1553 these romances were prohibited by law from being sold in the American colonies. In 1555 the Spanish Cortes demanded that all such publications be suppressed. But the passion had struck its roots deeply. It had become a national vice against which legal acts and edicts hurried themselves in vain. But the vogue of idle and superstitious tales, which had persisted beneath the frown of government, melted away before the magic smile of Cervantes. No more books of chivalry made their appearance after the publication of Don Quixote in 1605—"a solitary instance," as Ticknor says, "of the power of genius to destroy, by a single well-timed blow, an entire department, and that, too, a flourishing and favored one, in the literature of a great and proud nation." In accomplishing this, his quaint and wholesome humor has placed the universal spirit of humanity under tribute to his genius. He gave to the modern world, moreover, its first classical specimen of the "single-track mind" operating in all the transcendental tomfoolery of its exaggerated egoism, the precursor of that international paranoia grandiosa which, garbed in the guise of a meddling, misguided and spurious altruism, has been the scourge and plague of more recent times.

A most interesting feature of *Don Quixote* is the great number of its phrases which have since grown into general use as proverbs; in which respect Cervantes strongly resembles Rablais, although his humor is of a more innocent and wholesome character than that of the French author. A single phrase of this classical Spanish humor will show both its quaintness and its power: "Everyone is as God made him, and often a great deal worse." (*Don Quixote*, XI., 5.)

Spain's latest expression of gratitude toward her most gifted son occurred on March 6, 1920, when King Alfonso inaugurated a "Cervantes Hall" in the National Library at Madrid, in which a collection of copies of all the editions of *Don Quixote*, numbering more than 600, will be kept; and twenty tablets, representing subjects of Cervantes' writings, painted by Monoz Degrain, will decorate the hall. The director of the Biblioteca, Don Francis Rodriguez Marin, furnishes some interesting facts concerning the various Cervantes editions, the last census of which was made by Martin del Rio, in 1916, when it was ascertained that there were 637, including the abridged editions. These were distributed according to languages, as follows: Castilian, 252; French, 121; English, 115; German, 49; Dutch, 22; Italian, 19; Swedish, 10; Russian, 10; Portuguese, 6; Polish, 6; Hungarian, 5; Catalan, 3; Greek, 3; Danish, 3; Bohemian, 1; Croatian, 1; Hindustani, 1, and Polyglot, 1. Since this census was made other editions have been discovered and acquired, so that the total now reaches 648. One of the recently acquired editions is Norwegian, while another is Hebrew-German, the gift of Dr. Yahuda. Two other editions are in Japanese, the gift of a cultured Spaniard, Don Juan C. Cebrian, of San Francisco, California.

### III.

#### CAMOENS.

The greatest name in the literary annals of Portugal is that of Luiz de Camoens, author of the "Lusiad," an epic poem which ranks among the really great literary creations of the world, and which has securely won its place in what Goethe calls the "welt-literatur." Camoens wrote in both Portugese and Spanish, but his fame is erected upon his masterpiece, "Os Lusiadas"—literally, The Lusitanians—which takes for its theme the voyage of Vasco de Gama around the Cape of Good Hope, and incidentally narrates the chief glories of the people of Portugal, the Lusitanian people.

In point of priority of publication, Camoens' "Lusiad" is the first great epic of modern times, having preceded the "Jerusalem" of Tasso, who flourished at about the same time; although, to be sure, critics are agreed that his work is inferior to the Italian masterpiece. In the opinion of Hallam, Camoens, in point of fame, "ranks among the poets of the South immediately after the first names of Italy; nor is the distinctive character that belongs to the poetry of the southern languages anywhere more fully perceived than in the Lusiad."

Probably the best known of the English translations of the Lusiad is that of Mickle. But, as Southey has remarked: "In every language there is a magic of words as untranslatable as the Sesame in the Arabian tale; you may retain the meaning, but, if the words be changed, the spell is lost. The magic has its effect only upon those to whom the language is as familiar as their mother-tongue, hardly, indeed, upon any but those to whom it is really such. Camoens possesses it in perfection; it is his peculiar excellence."

In addition to his epic, Camoens is the author of numerous odes, elegies, sonnets, satires and epistles, besides three comedies



—King Seleucus," "Filidemo" and another modeled upon Plautus, "Os Amphitryoes," the same great model so often imitated in England Germany and France. Some of his lyrics are written with much tenderness and beauty, and with a facile sweetness of expression, a kind of langorous softness and melancholy mildness which are well portrayed in this bit of mellifluous verse on a concealed but unhappy passion:

De dentro tengo mi mal,  
Que de fora no ay senal.  
Mi nueva y dulce querella  
Es invisible a la gente:  
El alma sola la siente,  
Qu' el cuerpo no es dino della:  
Como la viva sentella  
S' encubre en el pedernal,  
De dentro tengo mi mal.

Within, within, my sorrow lives,  
But outwardly no token gives.  
All young and gentle in the soul,  
All hidden from men's eyes,  
Deep, deep within it lies,  
And scorns the body's low control.  
As in the flint the hidden spark  
Gives outwardly no sign or mark,  
Within, within, my sorrow lives.

Another characteristic specimen is his beautiful Spanish ballad, beginning,—

Irme quiero, madre,  
A aquella galera,  
Con el marino  
A ser marinera.  
I long to go, dear mother mine,  
Aboard yon galley fair,  
With that young sailor that I love,  
His sailor life to share.

"Most of his sonnets," says the German scholar Bouterwek, in his *History of Portuguese Literature*, "have love for their theme, and they are of very unequal merit; some are full of Petrarchic tenderness and grace, and moulded with classic correctness; others are impetuous and romantic, or disfigured by false learning, or full of tedious pictures of the conflicts of passion with reason. Upon the whole, however, no Portuguese poet has so correctly seized the character of the sonnet as Camoens." Notwithstanding faults that are obvious, the "*Lusiad*" contains beauties which distinguish it clearly as the work of a master. There is a certain clarity of narration and transparency of style which the reader cannot fail to note. There are likewise bold and lofty flights of imagination, such as that which calls forth the genius of the river Ganges, appearing to King Emanuel of Portugal, in a dream, inviting that Prince to discover its secret origins; and, in the fifth canto, the noble concept of the "Spirit of the Cape," the guardian genius of those uncharted seas, rising in tempests from the deep, to warn the daring mariners, as they rounded Good Hope, that they should proceed no farther. This is said to be one of the most celebrated and striking figures to be found in modern literature.

Camoens lived from 1524 to 1579. His life was divided 'twixt love and war. In his early manhood he was welcomed at the court of Lisbon. Here he conceived an attachment for one of the Queen's ladies of honor. He was banished from the court and separated from the lady he loved. From that time forth, he spent the greater part of his life in foreign wars, a voluntary exile from the land he cherished and which his great works have so signally honored. Returning after years of wandering, he presented his noble epic to King Sebastian, and was given a paltry pension of about twenty dollars! He lived for a few years, with his old mother, and then passed away unnoticed, in a public hospital.

#### IV. QUEVEDO.

Born at Madrid in 1580, a contemporary of Lope de Vega and Cervantes, Francisco Gomez de Quevedo y Villegas was the first great satirist of modern times. He was a man of profound erudition, being deeply versed in both civil and canon law, mathematics and medicine, a graduate in theology, and a master of Hebrew, Arabic, Greek, Latin and Italian. He was a cripple, and also suffered from defective eyesight.

In early life he fought a duel in defense of a woman, and slew his opponent, who happened to be a person of rank. He then fled to Sicily, and entered the service of the viceroy, the Duke of Ossuna, for whom he conducted many important diplomatic negotiations. Later he became minister of finance at Naples, and further distinguished himself in diplomacy, conducting successful negotiations with Savoy, Venice and Rome. Quevedo discharged all his public offices with marked credit to himself and his country. But, with the fall of his patron, the great Duke of Ossuna, he was exiled.

When again recalled to favor at the court of Spain, Quevedo refused office, declining, respectively, the posts of Secretary of State and Ambassador to Genoa, having determined to give himself up wholly to letters. Suspected of having written some anonymous verses against the king, he was suddenly seized and spirited away to prison, where he languished for several years, although he was known to be innocent of the trifling charge against him. His persecution was due to the implacable enmity of the cruel Duke of Olivares, to whom he wrote a pathetic letter in which he said: "No clemency can add many years to my life; no rigor can take many away." His health, indeed, was broken beyond all hope of cure. But he did not secure his liberty until Olivares was driven from power.

Quevedo wrote everything, from methaphysics to Gypsey ballads. He suffered much, and he suffered innocently; and he died a ruined, broken, embittered and disappointed man. On his death-bed he requested that nearly all his works be suppressed. His works are published in eleven volumes, three of poetry, and eight of prose. He translated Epictetus, parts of Plutarch, Seneca, and Anacreon, and wrote much in the manner of Juvenal and Persius.

In addition to his acquired culture, Quevedo was a man of extraordinary natural endowments. Some of his religious and love poems are full of beauty and tenderness. But his principal works are in prose, and his satirical prose works are his best. His "Paul the Sharper" has been translated into English, French, German and Italian. His "Visions" have won for him a world-wide fame. An English version, by L'Estrange, won great popularity in the seventeenth century.

Quevedo hurled the shafts of his cutting ridicule against the current literary affectation known as "Cultismo," then at the height of its folly. With terrible bitterness he inveighed against the vices of the times. But he lacked Cervantes' fine sense of the ridiculous. He was endowed with marvelous wit, but there was too much bitterness in his soul to develop a kindly sense of humor. His truculent sarcasm, galling satire and biting irony could infuriate but it could not destroy. The following is from his "Vision" of the Day of Judgment:

"But when it was fairly understood of all that this was the Day of Judgment, it was worth seeing how the voluptuous tried to avoid having their eyes found for them, that they need not bring into court witnesses against themselves,—how the malicious tried to avoid their own tongues, and how robbers and assassins seemed willing to wear out their feet running away from their hands. And turning partly round, I saw one miser asking another whether, because the dead were to rise that day, certain money-bags of his must also rise. I should have laughed heartily at this, if I had not, on the other side, pitied the eagerness with which a great rout of notaries rushed by, flying from their own ears, in order to avoid hearing what awaited them, though none

succeeded in escaping, except those who in this world had lost their ears as thieves, which, owing to the neglect of justice, was by no means the majority. But what I most wondered at was to see the bodies of two or three shop-keepers, that had put on their souls wrong-side out, and crowded all five of their senses under the nails of their right hands."

## V.

### ·THE ARGENSOLAS.

Seldom has the literature of any nation presented the work of two brothers attaining such eminence as the Argensola brothers, Bartolomeo Leonardo (born 1566, died 1633) and Lupercio Leonardo (born 1565, died 1613), both of whom reached high rank in Spanish letters.

Bartolomeo was almoner to the Empress Maria, widow of Maximilian II., and when his brother Lupercio died he took his place as Historiographer of Aragon. Pope Paul II. appointed him canon of the Cathedral in Saragossa. The following sonnet, on "Providence" (translation by Herbert) is in his characteristic manner:

"Parent of good! Since all thy laws are just,  
Say, why permits thy judging Providence  
Oppression's hand to bow meek Innocence,  
And gives prevailing strength to Fraud and Lust;  
Who steels with stubborn force the arm unjust,  
That proudly wars against Omnipotence?  
Who bids thy faithful sons, that reverence  
Thine holy will, be humbled in the dust?"—  
Amid the din of Joy fair Virtue sighs,  
While the fierce conqueror binds his iniquous head  
With laurel, and the car of triumph rolls.—  
Thus I, when radiant 'fore my wondering eyes  
A heavenly spirit stood, and smiling said:  
"Blind moralist! is Earth the sphere of souls?"

Lupercio wrote three tragedies which won high praise from Cervantes, and was also the author of many canzones, satires and sonnets, which have been published with the poems of his brother. "Both brothers," says Ticknor, "are to be placed high in the list of Spanish lyric poets; next, perhaps, after the great masters. The elder shows, on the whole, more original power; but he left only half as many poems as his brother did." Speaking of the

purity of their style Lope de Vega says: "It seems as though they had come from Aragon to reform Castilian verse." The genius of the brothers was much alike; scarcely distinguishable in their work, as the English critic, Hallam, thinks; but the German Bouterwek assigns a higher place to Bartolomeo, and in this view he is supported by Dieze, another great German authority, who thinks that the eulogy of Nicolas Antonio on these brothers, although in rather extravagant terms, is fully merited by them.

Lupercio's "Mary Magdalen," which follows (translation by Bryant) is one of the finest specimens of Spanish lyrical verse:

Blessed, yet sinful one, and broken-hearted!

The crowd are pointing at the thing forlorn.

In wonder and in scorn

Thou weapest days of innocence departed,

Thou weapest, and thy tears have power to move

The Lord to pity and to love.

The greatest of thy follies is forgiven

Even for the least of all the tears that shine

On that pale cheek of thine.

Thou didst kneel down to Him who came from heaven,

Evil and ignorant, and thou shalt rise

Holy, and pure, and wise.

It is not much that to the fragrant blossom

The ragged briar should change; the bitter fir

Distil Arabia's myrrh;

Nor that, upon the wintry desert's bosom,

The harvest should rise plenteous, and the swain

Bear home abundant grain.

But come and see the bleak and barren mountains

Thick to their top with roses; come and see

Leaves on the dry, dead tree:

The perished plant, set out by living fountains,

Grows fruitful, and its beauteous branches rise

Forever toward the skies.

## VI. VILLEGAS.

A follower of the Argensolas, and whose youth had moved with admiration in their footsteps, as he often boasted, was Estevan Manuel de Villegas, called by Dieze "the Spanish Anacreon, the poet of the Graces." He is, as this German authority says, "one of the best lyric poets of Spain, excellent in the various styles he has performed, but, above all, in his odes and songs. His original poems are full of genius. His translations of Horace and Anacreon might often pass for original. Few surpass him in harmony of verse." (*Geschichte der Spanischen Dichtkunst*, p. 210.)

Villegas wrote much of his verse before he had reached the age of fourteen, and published the greater part of it before he was twenty-one. Owing to his youthful conceit and indiscretion he made the mistake of attacking Cervantes, Quevedo and Lope de Vega in his very first edition. This unfortunate bit of impertinence plagued him throughout his life and has had a tendency to mar his reputation ever since.

Villegas was born in 1596. He was married in 1626, and thereafter practically abandoned the field of letters for the less congenial profession of the law, which he was obliged to follow for a livelihood. In his mature years it appears that he attempted little or nothing worth while in the field of poetry, although he prepared a few essays on ancient authors and translated Boethius' "Consolations of Philosophy" into what is generally regarded as a classical specimen of Castilian prose. He died in 1669, after a life of poverty, and without having achieved the literary honors which he coveted, or attained the material resources he so sorely needed. He must have known, instinctively, the quality and value of his work, and had he been content to herald it forth with somewhat less of bravado, his own generation might have recognized



his worth, and he might not have died an unhappy and a disappointed man. An author cannot speak for his work; his work must speak for him.

We have nothing in English which can be at all compared with his imitations of Anacreon. His imitations of Horace and Catullus and Petrarch are not less amazing. Bouterwek, a recognized authority, declares: "The graceful luxuriance of the poetry of Villegas has no parallel in modern literature; and, generally speaking, no modern writer has so well succeeded in blending the spirit of ancient poetry with the modern."

In his "History of Spanish Literature," Mr. Ticknor thus speaks of Villegas' imitations of Anacreon: "They give such a faithful impression of the native sweetness of Anacreon as is not easily found elsewhere in modern literature." The reader will share with Mr. Ticknor his conclusion: "We close the volume of Villegas, therefore, with sincere regret that he, who, in his boyhood, could write poetry so beautiful,—poetry so imbued with the spirit of antiquity, and yet so full of the tenderness of modern feeling; so classically exact, and yet so fresh and natural,—should have survived its publication above forty years without finding an interval when the cares and disappointments of the world permitted him to return to the occupations that made his youth happy, and that have preserved his name for a posterity of which, when he first lisped in numbers, he could hardly have had a serious thought."

## VII.

### MONTALVO.

To Garcia Ordenez de Montalvo, governor of the city of Medina del Campo, we owe the earliest extant version of the "Amadis de Gaula," which during a period of two hundred years was the most popular prose romance of Christendom. He translated the tale from the Portugese between 1492 and 1504, and added to it a composition of his own, the fanciful story of "Esplandian," a son of Amadis. Montalvo flourished in the latter part of the fifteenth century. Beyond these facts, little or nothing is known of him.

Although French and English scholars have claimed for their respective literatures the honor of originating the Amadis, those honors belong to Spain and Portugal. Ayala, the Spanish Chancellor who was the first Spanish translator of Livy, a cautious, truthful, learned and sagacious man, mentions the Amadis. Ayala died in 1407. Zurara, keeper of the Archives of Portugal in 1454, says that "the book of Amadis" was "made entirely at the pleasure of one man, called Vasco De Lobeira, in the time of King Don Ferdinand; all the things in the said book being invented by its author." Lobeira died in 1403. His manuscript is now no longer extant, and we know his work only through Montalvo, his Spanish translator. The Portugese manuscript was known to exist in the archives of the Dukes of Arveiro, at Lisbon, as late as the year 1750. But from that time we know nothing further in regard to it, and it was possibly lost in the Lisbon earthquake, which destroyed the palace of the family of Arveiro in 1755.

The Amadis was translated into Italian as early as 1546. In 1560 Bernardo Tasso, father of the great author of the "Jerusalem Delivered," published his poem "Amadigi," which was made up almost entirely of materials taken from the Spanish romance. The brilliant author of the Jerusalem himself likewise praised the

great Spanish and Portugese story in the following language: "In the opinion of many, and particularly in my own opinion, it is the most beautiful, and perhaps the most profitable, story of its kind that can be read, because, in its sentiment and tone, it leaves all others behind it, and, in the variety of its incidents, yields to none written before or since." Six editions of the *Amadis* were published in Italy in less than thirty years. In France the first translation was published in 1540, followed by other editions without number. The first English translation was in 1619.

Montalvo intimates that his Spanish rendition of the romance is much better than its Portugese original. At any rate, it is a compact work of the imagination, not military like the story of Charlemagne, nor religious like the story of Arthur and the Holy Grail, but merely delineating the trials, the adventures and the virtues of a perfect knight, the currents of whose life and love are crossed by innumerable giants, magicians and wicked knights, but over all whom he finally triumphs and wins the hand and heart of his beloved Oriana.

The *Amadis* is written in simple style, and often exhibits passages of great tenderness and beauty, such as those which develop the love of Oriana and the "Child of the Sea." What Cervantes thought of the *Amadis* is recorded in Part I. of *Don Quixote*. When the barber, the housekeeper and the curate began to expurgate the library of *Don Quixote*, the first book taken from the shelf was the *Amadis de Gaula*.

"There is something mysterious about this matter," said the Curate; "for, as I have heard, this was the first book of knight errantry that was printed in Spain, and all the others have had their origin and source here, so that, as the arch-heretic of so mischievous a sect, I think he should, without a hearing, be condemned to the fire." "No, sir," said the barber, "for I, too, have heard that it is the best of all the books of its kind that have been written, and therefore, for its singularity, it ought to be forgiven." "That is the truth," answered the curate, "and so let us spare it for

the present'." A decision which, upon the whole, as one critic observes, has been confirmed by posterity, "and precisely for the reason that Cervantes assigned."

Montalvo's continuation of the Amadis in the story of Esplanadian is devoid of interest. Other additions were made by later authors, for the most part worthless, until the Amadis stories reached the immense proportion of twenty-six books. And then Duverdier capped the climax by bringing the broken threads of these stories together in seven volumes, entitled "*Roman des Romanes*."—Romance of Romances. So ends the history of the Portugese type of Amadis of Gaul, an eminent authority on Spanish literature remarks, as it was originally presented to the world in the Spanish romances of chivalry; "a fiction which, considering the passionate admiration it so long excited, and the influence it has, with little merit of its own, exercised on the poetry and romances of modern Europe ever since, is a phenomenon that has no parallel in literary history."

## VIII.

### GUILLEN DE CASTRO.

Born of a noble family in Valencia in 1569, in his native city Guillen de Castro early became distinguished as a man of letters. His life, however, was not wholly devoted to literature. At one time he held a place in the government of the viceroy of Naples. At another time we find him serving as a captain of Cavalry. Cervantes speaks of him as one of the popular dramatic authors of his day. He died in poverty in 1631.

Guillen de Castro was a personal friend of Lope de Vega, whose manner of dramatic composition he followed. Aside from twenty-seven or twenty-eight of his dramas, very few of his works have been published. He dramatized a part of "Don Quixote," and this drama was translated into French as early as 1638, when it was brought on the French stage by Guerin de Bouscal. His "Santa Barbara" was imitated by Calderon in the "Wonderworking Magician."

But Castro's chief service to the literature of Europe lay in his adaptation and dramatization of the old anonymous metrical romance of "The Cid." This drama is entitled "Las Mocedades del Cid".—The Youth, or Youthful Adventures, of the Cid. His great French contemporary, Corneille, made Castro's work the basis of his own brilliant tragedy of The Cid, a drama which for two hundred years fixed the character of the stage throughout Europe. Thus the father of French tragedy owes much to the genius of his Spanish predecessor.

The following passage from Castro's work, depicting the anxiety of the Cid's father who is waiting in the twilight for his heroic son, after the duel, is regarded as superior to Corneille's presentation of the same scene:

"The timid ewe bleats not so mournfully,  
It, shepherd lost, nor cries the angry lion  
With such a fierceness for its stolen young,  
As I for Roderic.—My son! my son!  
Each shade I pass, amid the closing night,  
Seems still to wear thy form and mock my arms!  
O, why, why comes he not? I gave the sign,—  
I marked the spot,—and yet he is not here!  
Has he neglected? Can he disobey?  
It may not be! A thousand terrors seize me.  
Perhaps some injury or accident  
Has made him turn aside his hastening step;—  
Perhaps he may be slain, or hurt or seized.  
The very thought freezes my breaking heart.  
O holy Heaven, how many ways for fear  
Can grief find out!—But Hark! What do I hear?  
Is it his foot-step? Can it be? O, no!  
'Tis but the echo of my grief I hear.  
But hark again! Methinks there comes a gallop  
On the flinty stones. He springs from off his steed!"

"The Poem of the Cid," covering nearly four thousand lines, upon which Castro bases his famous drama, is one of the classics of the mediaeval ages, as well as among the earliest and most characteristic specimens of Spanish poetry. The Cid was the great Spanish hero of the age of Chivalry, and was born in north-western Spain, about the year 1040—a quarter of a century before the Battle of Hastings,—and he died at Valencia in 1099, while the knights of Christendom who followed Godfrey of Bouillon on the First Crusade were planting the Christian standards upon the walls of Jerusalem. The Cid himself had devoted the greater part of his life to battling with the Saracens on the Moorish frontiers of Spain where for centuries Spanish bravery held back the Mohammedan advance. His name was originally Rodrigo Diaz, and the title of Cid came to him in the field, from the fact that five Moorish chieftains vanquished by him in a single battle acknowledged him as their Seid, or conqueror.

"The Poem of the Cid" is a spirited portrayal of Spanish Chivalry, and a living picture of the stirring times described. It breathes the spirit of battle, and rings throughout with the clang of lance and shield. The reader may gain an idea of its chivalric dash and spirit from these lines, translated by J. Hookman Freere, describing the scene at Alcocer, where, besieged by the Moors, the Cid saved himself by a bold sally, in which he overwhelmed the Moorish line:

"Their shields before their breasts, forth at once they go,  
 Their lances in the rest, levelled fair and low,  
 Their banners and their crests, waving in a row,  
 Their heads all stooping down toward the saddle-bow;  
 The Cid was in the midst, his shout was heard afar,  
 'I am Ruy Diaz, the champion of Bivar;  
 Strike amongst them, Gentlemen, for sweet mercy's sake!  
 There where Bermuez fought amidst the foe they brake,  
 Three hundred bannered knights, it was a gallant show.  
 Three hundred Moors they killed, a man with every blow;  
 When they wheeled and turned, as many more were slain;  
 You might see them raise their lances, and level them again."

The reader will agree with Ticknor, in his History of Spanish Literature, when he says concerning this poem: "It is, indeed, a work which, as we read it, stirs us with the spirit of the times it describes; and as we lay it down and recollect the intellectual condition of Europe when it was written, and for a long time before, it seems certain, that, during the thousand years which elapsed from the time of the decay of Greek and Roman culture, down to the appearance of the '*Divinia Commedia*,' no poetry was produced so original in its tone or so full of natural feeling, picturesqueness and energy."

Castro was more faithful to the incidents of the poem than was Correille, and the great Frenchman would have been less deserving of the censure of Richelieu and the French Academy had he adhered more closely to his Spanish original; although, it must be confessed that in some respects he has improved upon the Spanish work.

## IX.

### VICENTE.

In his "Literature of Europe" Mr. Hallam cites an article from the *Biographie Universelle* in proof of the statement that the first drama produced in modern Europe was by Gil Vicente, a Portugese. It was a spiritual drama, and was performed at Lisbon on the festival of Corpus Christi, in 1504. But Ticknor declares that Vicente's first drama was presented in 1502.

The date of Vicente's birth is not known, but he died in 1557. He produced tragedies, comedies and farces, besides works of religious devotion. Ticknor thinks that, taken together, they are better than anything else in Portugese literature. Many of his plays, however, are written in Spanish, a language which he handled with equal facility. Ten of his plays are in Castilian, fifteen partly so, and seventeen in Portugese. Vicente therefore, must be classed among the great authors of both Spain and Portugal.

Joan de Barros, the Portugese historian, writing in 1785, praises Vicente for the purity of his thought and style. The real power of Vicente lies in his poetry, or in the poetic parts of his dramas. The following verse, illustrating his lyrical style, is from Bowring's translation:

The rose looks out in the valley,  
And thither will I go,  
To the rosy gale, where the nightingale  
Sings his song of woe.

It is worthy of note that in Gil Vicente's poetry it is the male nightingale which sings, and not the female. Many of the poets (Petrarch, Milton and Shakespeare among them) have fallen into the rather curious error of causing the female nightingale to sing. Vicente appears to have observed nature more closely than some other singers of first-rate powers. Through his lyrical talents



some of Vicente's dramas are made to serve a political purpose. Thus, when recruits are wanted for an expedition against the Moors of Africa, he closes one of his pieces with this poetical exhortation by way of envoi:

To the field! To the field!  
Cavaliers of emprise!  
Angels pure from the skies  
Come to help us and shield.  
To the field! To the field!  
With armor all bright,  
They speed down the road,  
On man call, on God  
To succor the right.

Gil Vicente wrote many pastoral dramas and autos. One of these, written about 1503, was first presented in the monastery of Enxobregas, one Christmas morning, before the royal family. It is entitled "The Auto of the Sibyl Cassandra," and is of interest, not only as one of the very earliest dramatic pieces of modern times, but because of the pastoral elegance of some of the lyrics. Cassandra, the shepherd-maid, declines to marry. In the course of the play she sings this song:

They say "'Tis time, go marry! go!"  
But I'll no husband! not I! no!  
For I would live all carelessly,  
Amidst these hills, a maiden free,  
And never ask, nor anxious be,  
Of wedded weal or woe.  
Yet still they say, "Go marry! go!"  
But I'll no husband! not I! no!

So, Mother, think not I shall wed,  
And through a tiresome life be led,  
Or use, in folly's ways instead,  
What grace the heavens bestow.  
Yet still they say, "Go marry! go!"  
But I'll no husband! not I! no!

The man has not been born, I ween,  
Who as my husband shall be seen;  
And since what frequent tricks have been  
Undoubtedly I know,  
In vain they say, "Go marry! go!"  
For I'll no husband! not I! no!

Gil Vicente was the father of the Portugese drama, if not of the drama of modern Europe. He was an actor as well as a playwright, and his children often acted with him. His works were first collected and published by his son, four years after the death of Vicente. A monumental edition was brought out at Hamburg, in 1832.

## X.

### CALDERON.

The latest luminary of the golden age of Spanish literature was Pedro Calderon de la Barca, the great rival and successor of Lope de Vega. He was born January 17, 1600, and died on the Feast of Pentecost, 1681, while all Spain was ringing with his religious plays, and while engaged in literary work; "dying," according to his friend De Solis, "as they say the swan dies, singing." So great was his fame that at Naples, Lisbon and Rome his death was publicly noted as a national calamity.

Like Corneille, his French contemporary, Calderon was educated by the Jesuits. He served in the Spanish wars of the period and was a favorite at the court of Madrid. He composed his first literary work when barely fourteen years of age, and was still writing when death called him, at the age of eighty-one. He was thirty-five years old when Lope de Vega died, and from that time forth he was undisputed master of the Spanish stage.

Calderon is said to have been a man of singularly handsome countenance, courtly manners, of dignified and chaste deportment, and possessed of a voice of rare sweetness, gentleness and beauty. No man was more deeply or more deservedly beloved by his contemporaries. He was of a most considerate and benevolent nature, and his brilliant successes did not mar his meek, modest, pious and sunny spirit. He was firmly opposed to publishing his works, and thus the task of collecting them has been rendered very difficult. But he wrote not less than 127 plays and 97 autos. No man ever equalled him in the auto, or religious drama, and from this source alone he amassed a fortune, the whole of which was devoted to charitable works.

The plots of Calderon, like those of Lope de Vega, are characterized by great ingenuity. He has been a fertile field for the dramatists of other countries, notably Corneille in France, and

Gozzi in Italy. Two of his comedies were translated by the Earl of Bristol. Dryden took his "Mock Astrologer" from Corneille, who, in turn, borrowed it from Calderon. His "El Principe Constante," translated by A. W. Schlegel, was brought out in Germany under the auspices of Goethe, and was acted with great success at Weimar, Berlin and Vienna. J. Schultze ranks it with the "Divinia Commedia."

A. W. Schlegel, the man who gave Shakespeare to Germany, performed a similar service for Calderon, whose work, in some respects, he regarded as superior to that of Shakespeare. It is admitted that Schlegel's German translation of Shakespeare is the best in any foreign language, and the same is doubtless true of his translation of Calderon.

When Calderon reached middle life he joined a religious order, and became a priest of the Congregation of St. Peter, of which he rose to be the superior, and held that sacred office during the last fifteen years of his life. "He knew how," as Augustin de Lara said of him, "to unite by humility and prudence, the duties of an obedient child and a loving father."

In both his lyrics and his dramatic works Calderon is noted for his moving tenderness, the glowing enchantment and dazzling brilliance of his imagery, the preternatural splendor of his scenic effects, the superabundance of his vocabulary, the rich variety of his measures, the charming and delicious melody of his rhyme, his marvelous fluency of versification, and the serene Castilian majesty of his style. But few of his lyrical works have survived. A specimen of his simple and tender lyrical style is the poem, in ballad measure, of which the burden is 'O dulce Jesus mio, no entres, Senor, con vuestro siervo en juicio!' Two stanzas follow:

How much resembles here our birth  
The final hour of all!  
Weeping at first we see the earth,  
And weeping hear death's call.  
O, spare me, Jesus, spare me, Savior dear,  
Nor meet thy servant as a judge severe!

When first we entered this dark world,  
We hailed it with a moan;  
And when we leave its confines dark,  
Our farewell is a groan.  
O, spare me, Jesus, spare me, Savior dear,  
Nor meet thy servant as a judge severe!



PART FIVE

GREAT FRENCH AUTHORS



- I. MONTAIGNE.
- II. RABLAIS.
- III. FENELON.
- IV. MONTESQUIEU.
- V. CORNEILLE.
- VI. RACINE.
- VII. MOLIERE.
- VIII. LA FONTAINE.
- IX. VOLTAIRE.

Of all European literature the French is by general consent that which possesses the most uniformly fertile, brilliant and unbroken history.

—Saintsbury.



## I.

### MONTAIGNE.

The father of the modern essay was Michel Eyquem de Montaigne, whose volume is the earliest of the French classics, and the publication of whose essays marked an epoch in the literature of the world.

Montaigne was born on the last day of February, 1533. He learned Latin before he learned French, his father having placed him in infancy under a German tutor who addressed him only in Latin. He was educated in the law, but soon abandoned that profession. He was a "councilor" in the Parliament of Bordeaux, and was twice chosen mayor of that city. He conducted negotiations between King Henry IV. of Navarre and the Duke of Guise, with both of whom he was upon friendliest terms. He was highly esteemed by Catherine de Medicis, by the Kings of France who reigned in his lifetime, and generally by the public men of his day, regardless of faction, politics or religion—a statement which probably cannot be made of any other equally prominent person of that unsettled and bloody era. In this respect his career reminds us of that of Petrarch, the great Italian. His fairness, his patience and his equanimity won the hearts of all, and his character was a better defense for him than an army of soldiers. During all the civil wars of that stormy period the chateau of Montaigne was left unguarded and unbarred. He had, as he said, "no other guard or sentinel than the stars."

At the age of thirty-eight he decided to eschew public life altogether and give his time wholly to literature; a resolution which he was not able to carry out in its entirety, but in which he at least approximately succeeded. Whether in his library with his Plutarch and Seneca, or patching up truces for the Duke of Guise and King Henry IV., or serving the court of France, or arbitrating, in the mayoralty of Bordeaux, the differences of his

neighbors, he led a life of serene and tranquil contemplation, displaying at all times his candid and sincere temper, and mingling a sort of amiable skepticism with an honest faith in God and a genuine love of man.

Montaigne has been more generally read than any other prose-writer of the sixteenth century, and is still one of the favorite authors of mankind. It is very doubtful if there is a single person of broad and liberal culture in all the world today, who has not at some period of his life fallen under the sorcerer's spell of old Montaigne. He and Machiavelli were the writers who most profoundly influenced the thought of the sixteenth century; and, as Hallam observes, these two, and Rablais, are the only writers of that age, aside from poets and historians, who are much read at the present time.

The perennial charm of Montaigne is as hard to define as it is difficult to resist. Whether the appeal may be thought to lie in his sprightly humor, in his rambling and discursive manner, in his desultory, cheerful, conversational style, his bewitching affluence of speech, his fascinating simplicity, his placid equability, or in the opalescent brightness of those pages which he has graced with such an aerial delicacy and lightness of touch, he entertains, he soothes and satisfies the leisure hour. When the King of France told Montaigne that he liked his essays, the latter replied: "Then, sire, you will like me; I am my essays." And he tells us the same thing in his preface: "Thus, reader, myself am the matter of my book; there's no reason thou shouldst employ thy leisure about so frivolous and vain a subject." But, for all that, as Emerson has said: "This book of Montaigne the world has endorsed by translating it into all tongues, and printing seventy-five editions of it in Europe; and that, too, a circulation somewhat chosen, namely, among courtiers, soldiers, princes, men of the world, and men of wit and generosity." Sainte-Beuve calls him "the French Horace"—an eminently apt characterization, too; for the reader of Montaigne cannot have escaped his Horatian attitude throughout. He is, indeed, a true and living exemplification of Horace's "golden mean." Balzac said of him that he

carried human reason as far and as high as it could go, both in politics and in morals. But that, we should say, is taking the French essayist rather too seriously. It reminds one of the statement of Charles Francis Adams in his Phi Beta Kappa address at Cambridge, in 1883, wherein he said that he preferred the "philosophy" of Montaigne to the "platitudes" of Cicero. However, it is hardly to be supposed that Cicero will suffer in any comparison with Montaigne, notwithstanding the opinion of the American scholar just quoted. When we have said of Montaigne that he possessed tact, good sense, a kindly spirit, the saving grace of humor, and an unfailing literary charm, we have said as much as can be said for most great prose writers of the sixteenth century.

Montaigne, like Horace, has been peculiarly the companion of the literati of the generations that have succeeded him. Epicurian in his tendencies he undoubtedly was; but he was not the proponent of any particular sect or school of thought. To say that he argued for any specific set or system of ideas in politics, religion or philosophy, is to misapprehend his meaning. But he speaks truth; whether by accident or design, directly or by innuendo, apparently does not concern him. His air is that of one who speaks for entertainment—and primarily for his own diversion. He has no cause to argue, no point to prove. He is not seeking proselytes or making followers. What does it matter? And this beguiling attitude of nonchalance, this sweet insouciance is one secret of his charm. He talks and clatters along at an amazing rate, but the spirit of controversy is not in him. He is not polemical, nor emotional. He does not care to convince, seek to persuade, nor mean to offend. If he has jarred the nerves of Pascal and Malebranche, it was, we are persuaded, wholly unintentional—and he would say so now, if he could; but he might add, as he does in his essay, "Of Repentance": "I speak truth, not so much as I would, but as much as I dare; and I dare a little the more as I grow older."

Hallam has observed that Montaigne's great influence has been felt not directly upon the multitude so much as through

the great minds he has reached and helped to mould. We know that his influence upon Shakespeare was very great. Victor Hugo thinks that he saved the English bard from the conceits of the Italian school, and thus made Hamlet possible. However that may be, we are at liberty to surmise that Montaigne was in Shakespeare's library, and we know that in "The Tempest," in the speech of Gonzalo, wherein the ideal commonwealth is described, the words are taken almost verbatim from Montaigne's Essays, Bk. I., Chap. 30.

"His book," says Sainte-Beuve, "is a treasure-house of moral observations and of experience; at whatever page it is opened, and in whatever condition of mind, some wise thought expressed in a striking and enduring fashion is certain to be found. It will at once detach itself and engrave itself on the mind, a beautiful meaning in full and forcible words, in one vigorous line, familiar or great. The whole of his book, said Etienne Pasquier, is a real seminary of beautiful and remarkable sentences, and they come in so much the better that they run and hasten on without thrusting themselves into notice. There is something for every age, for every hour of life."

## II.

### RABLAIS.

Francois Rablais was born about 1490 and died about 1553. The exact dates are unknown. He was the son of a tavern keeper and apothecary of Chinon, in Touraine. He was first a Franciscan Monk, then a Benedictine, then a secular priest, and then a physician, by virtue of various permits from the Vatican. On January 18, 1536, Pope Paul III issued a bull granting him authority to gratuitously practice medicine, excluding surgery, because of his "zeal for religion, knowledge of literature, and probity of life and morals." The Holy Father must have strained a point when he signed that statement, or else—he did not know Rablais. The reference to his literary knowledge, however, is amply justified, for Rablais was one of the most learned men of his century. His was perhaps the keenest intelligence of that generation of men. But as to his zeal for religion, and his probity of life and morals—well, perhaps the Vatican may not have enjoyed special sources of information which have been disclosed by the vigilance of modern scholarship. To the best of our knowledge, we are inclined to apply to him the observation which Lady Wortley Montague applied to Henry Fielding: "His happy constitution made him forget everything when he was before a venison pastry, or over a flask of champagne."

In Pantagruel's history, Rablais, with his rollicking humor and redundant fertility of language, has given us the most brilliant piece of fiction which French literature of that age affords, and, with all its moral coarseness, one of the greatest in the classics of all time. That such pungent wit and exuberant jollity, such joyous jest, such amiable raillery and exquisite humor, should be encompassed with such a nauseating mass of conglomerate verbal filth, is matter of most poignant regret.

"In Gargantua and Pantagruel," says Dr. Benjamin Willis

Wells, "frank fooling is mingled with keen social satire, political insight, and pedagogic wisdom. . . . In the first book, *Gargantua*, will be found, together with the farcial adventure of that giant, the notable deeds of Friar John, the founding of the Abbey of Thelema, and the quintessence of Rablaisian social and pedagogical philosophy. The second had for its original descriptive title *Pantagruel, King of the Drunkards, Portrayed According to Life, with His Amazing Deeds and Feats of Prowess.*' . . . Rablais's influence on the development of fiction was small, but *Pantagruel*, *Panurge* and *Friar John* are imperishable creations." We learn from one of Rablais's biographies that in France the time of paying a reckoning in a drink-shop is still called, among the *Pantagruellists*, or good fellows, a "*quart d'heure de Rabelais*"—or Rablais's quarter of an hour.

Rablais is the French Aristophanes; but he also resembles Lucian. In his satire he has been likened to both Swift and Cervantes; but he is a greater scholar than either, although lacking the terrible vehemence of Swift and the majestic equability of Cervantes. It may interest some of our money-mad financiers to know that *Panurge* had sixty-three ways of making money, "of which the honestest was by sly theft."

"*Panurge* is so admirably conceived," says Hallam, "that we may fairly reckon him original; but the germ of the character is in the *gracioso*, or clown, of the extemporaneous stage; the roguish, selfish, cowardly, cunning attendant, who became *Panurge* in the plastic hands of Rablais, and *Sancho* in those of Cervantes. The French critics have not, in general done justice to Rablais, whose manner was not that of the age of Louis XIV. The '*Tale of a Tub*' appears to me by far the closest imitation of it, and to be conceived altogether in a kindred spirit; but, in general, those who have had reading enough to rival the copiousness of Rablais have wanted his invention and humor, or the riotousness of his animal spirits."

Pope in his "*Dunciad*" (Book I.) also notes the Rablaisian similarity of Swift, in the following lines:

"O thou! whatever title please thine ear,  
Dean, Drapier, Bickerstaff or Gulliver!  
Whether thou choose Cervantes' serious air,  
Or laugh and shake in Rablais' easy chair."

However, a distinguished French author, M. Taine, in his History of English Literature, says that Swift "must not be compared with Rablais; that good giant, that drunken doctor, rolls himself joyously about on his dunghill, thinking no evil; the dunghill is warm, convenient, a fine place to philosophize and sleep off one's wine. When the casks are emptied down his throat, and the viands are gorged, we sympathize with so much bodily comfort; \* \* \* in the laughter of this Homeric mouth we see, as through a mist, the relics of bacchanal religions, the fecundity, the monstrous joy of nature; these are the splendors of its first births."

But Rablais was something more than a humorist, gourmand and scorner of conventionalities. "In the young Gargantua's course of education," writes the French master-critic, Sainte-Beuve, "we have the first plan of what Montaigne, Charron, in places and parts the Port Royal school, the Christian school \* \* \* set forth with greater seriousness but not with more good sense. We have in advance at one glance, and with brilliant genius, what Rousseau will expound later in 'Emile'."

In early life Voltaire put Rablais down as merely "a drunken philosopher, who only wrote when he was drunk." But twenty-five years later he wrote to Madame du Deffand: "After Clarissa Harlowe, I read over again some chapters of Rablais. \* \* \* I know them, indeed, almost by heart, but I read them with the greatest pleasure, because they are the most vivid descriptions in the world. It is not that I regard Rablais as equal to Horace. Rablais, when he is in good humor, is the best of good buffoons; two of the craft are not wanted in a nation, but there must be one. I repent that I formerly spoke ill of him."

"Yes," as Sainte-Beuve adds, "Rablais is a buffoon, but a unique buffoon, a Homeric buffoon! Voltaire's latest opinion will

remain that of all men of sense and taste, of those who do not possess a decided inclination and predilection for Rablais. But for the rest, for the true amateur, for the real pantagruelist devotees, Rablais is something very different. At the bottom of Master Francois's cask, even in the dregs, there is a flavor not to be explained."

Like Cervantes, Rablais teems with homely, common-sense aphorisms which have become household words throughout the world, such as, for example, his well-known couplet:

"The Devil was sick,—the Devil a monk would be;  
The Devil got well,—the Devil a monk was he."

According to Motteux, the last words of Rablais were these: "I am going to seek a great perhaps."



### III.

#### FENELON.

Of that mighty quintette of brilliant ecclesiastics surrounding the throne of Louis XIV.—Bossuet, Bourdaloue, Flechier, Massillon and Fenelon—the first named is still the most eloquent pulpit orator the world has ever known; but the name of Fenelon shines in French literature with a luster all its own, and rays forth upon the Age of the Grand Monarch its most splendid beams.

Fenelon was born in 1651, and died in 1715 after a life of active scholarship, pious humility and good works. His life was one of gentleness and moderation. In 1688 Louis XIV. appointed him tutor to his grandson, the Duke of Burgundy. He had been teaching at Paris while following the vocation of the priesthood, had written a book on education, and the new post was admirably adapted to his talents and suited to his inclinations. Bossuet said that the bestowal of this position upon Fenelon was “a proper reward for merit that took pains to conceal itself.” Many of Fenelon’s literary works—perhaps the majority of them—were composed as text-books for the young prince. At any rate he discharged his duties with such fidelity and zeal that in 1694 he was made Abbot of Saint Valery, and the next year he was made Archbishop of Cambray. So wide was the fame of the charity and piety of the great Archbishop that when the country was ravaged by the English under Marlborough, the English general gave orders that none of the estates of the Archbishop were to be invaded, and a guard was given him for his protection. Nevertheless, his residence was burned—by accident or mistake, it is supposed—and many of Fenelon’s unpublished manuscripts were destroyed, together with his priceless library. His only comment upon his calamity was: “I would much rather that this were destroyed than the cottage of some poor peasant!” But we know

how great the loss to him when we recall his words, written on another occasion: "If the crowns of all the kingdoms of Europe were laid at my feet in exchange for my books and my love of reading, I would spurn them all."

Further light is thrown upon the character of the saintly bishop by his part in the famous controversy over "Quietism"—a controversy which would now be forgotten by the literary world but for the fact that the two old friends, then the greatest luminaries of the Gallican Church—Bossuet and Fenelon—found themselves on opposite sides. In his "Maxims of the Saints," Fenelon appears to have fallen into some of the heresies of Madame Guyon, a religious woman of whose piety and good faith Fenelon had no doubt, although her "Quietism" smacks somewhat of the Hindu doctrine of "Nirvana." Bossuet, it appears, prosecuted the gentle Fenelon with great bitterness. Finally twenty-three propositions from the "Maxims" were condemned by the Pope, who said, however, that Fenelon had "erred through excess of Divine love, but you have erred through lack of love for your neighbor."

Fenelon appears to have been the first to write a treatise on female education, which he did, in 1681, at the request of the Duchess of Beauvilliers—"De l' education des filles"—of which there are a number of good English translations. In this book, which displays most characteristically the natural sweetness and charm of his humane disposition, Fenelon anticipates by a hundred years the foundations of modern pedagogy which are laid in Rousseau's "Emile," and is wholly free from any of the objectionable features of Rousseau. Fenelon's theory of education is indulgent, and his method a labor of love. As Hallam observes, "a desire to render children happy for the time, as well as afterward, runs through his book, and he may, perhaps, be considered the founder of that school which has endeavored to dissipate the terrors and dry the tears of childhood." Let us quote but a sentence: "I have seen," he says, "many children who have learned to read in play; we have only to read entertaining stories to them out of a book, and insensibly teach them the letters; they will soon desire to go for themselves to the source of their amuse-

ment." Frobel and Pestalozzi have added very little to the comprehensive view of child-life and growth expressed in this little treatise; while Locke's treatise, published at about the same time, is hardly to be compared with it.

One of the books written by Fenelon for his noble pupil was his "Dialogues of the Dead," patterned after Fontenelle, who, of course, took the idea from Lucian, the source whence the Spaniard. Quevedo, obtained the idea of his "Visions." But LaHarpe very much prefers the work of Fenelon to that of Fontenelle. "The noble zeal of Fenelon, not to spare the vices of kings, in writing for the heir of one so imperious and so open to the censure of reflecting minds, shines throughout these dialogues."

It was the same "noble zeal" displayed in the "Telemachus" that caused Fenelon's permanent banishment from the court of Louis XIV. This work, stolen by a servant and published without the author's consent, was declared to contain very plain references to the vices of the court of the Grand Monarch. But, nevertheless, it is Fenelon's greatest creation. Critics are not agreed as to whether the "Telemachus" is an epic or a romance. Blair declares it to be an epic. Hallam calls it a romance. But the reader will bear in mind, with Lord Kames, in his "Elements of Criticism," that the distinction is often shadowy indeed. Voltaire in his essay on "Epic Poetry" excludes the "Telemachus" from that class. It is a work of great moral and esthetic excellence, breathing the genuine classical spirit, noble in diction, rich in poetic imagery, charming in its grace and dignity, written in a remarkably harmonious and poetical prose, permeated by a beautiful enthusiasm, and covered as with a mantle of divine grace by the author's inimitable sweetness of style and spirit. No book in the French language has been more widely read, and none more fully deserves the popularity it still maintains. For, truly may it be said of Fenelon, as he said of another: "*Il embellit tout ce qu'il touche*"—He adorns all that he touches.

#### IV.

### MONTESQUIEU.

Charles de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu, President of the Parliament of Bordeaux, was born in 1689, and died in 1755. He was one of the most accomplished scholars of his day, and ranks among the greatest of political philosophers.

In 1721 he published his *Persian Letters*, in which, affecting the guise of a Persian, he ridiculed the civilization of his times. In 1734, after making a tour of Europe, he published his *Considerations on the Causes of the Grandeur and Decadence of the Romans*. Fourteen years later appeared his master work, the *Spirit of Laws*, upon which he had been engaged for twenty years, and which will be forever numbered among the classics.

His favorite authors were Tacitus and Plutarch, and Tacitus is perhaps the only great writer who has equalled him in the conciseness of his style. Voltaire said of him that "when the human race had lost their charters, Montesquieu rediscovered and restored them." The King of Sardinia declared that Montesquieu had taught him the art of government. But it was in America that the brilliant French publicist was to score his most splendid triumph. American liberty owes more to the mind of Montesquieu than it does to the arm of Lafayette.

It is said that Washington, as soon as he determined to attend the federal congress at Philadelphia, "made himself familiar with the writings of Montesquieu." The address penned by John Dickinson and issued by authority of congress to the people of Quebec, in the hope of gaining their aid in the projected revolution, was made up principally of apt quotations from the "*Spirit of Laws*." A well-known writer has declared that the American colonial leaders "knew Montesquieu as familiarly as they knew the traditions of Englishmen." Madison, Jefferson, Hamilton,

Washington and Gouverneur Morris were among those who knew Montesquieu better than they knew Blackstone.

When the adoption of the Federal Constitution was under consideration, the author most cited and quoted in those discussions was Montesquieu. Singularly enough he was, like the Bible, sometimes cited as authority by both sides, and the discussion was in some instances narrowed simply to a correct interpretation of the French author. When his real opinions were determined, the matter was beyond controversy. His recommendations were accepted with implicit faith. No one had the temerity to doubt his wisdom. None questioned the truth of his conclusions or the justice of his observations. To these giant statesmen his voice was oracular and his word was law.

The longest quotation in the *Federalist* is in one of Hamilton's papers, and it is from Montesquieu. When Madison was seeking to demonstrate the wisdom of separating the executive, legislative and judicial powers, he said ("The Federalist," No. xlvii): "The oracle who is always consulted and cited on this subject, is the celebrated Montesquieu. If he be not the author of this invaluable precept in the science of politics, he has the merit at least of displaying and recommending it most effectually to the attention of mankind." In this view Madison is supported by Dr. Francis Lieber, the political guide of Justice Story and Chancellor Kent, and the personal friend and adviser of Lincoln. Lieber declared, in a note to page 150 of his "Civil Liberty and Self-Government," that "Montesquieu is the first political philosopher who distinctively conceived the necessity of a division of power." Montesquieu was likewise one of the chief authorities, if not the principal one, cited in support of the idea of a federal union. Jeremy Bentham notes also that he was one of the first to see the harmfulness of too many laws and an intricate code; a lesson which Montesquieu first learned, no doubt, from his Tacitus (*Annals*, Bk. III., p. 160): "Corruption abounding in the commonwealth, the commonwealth abounded in laws."

Montesquieu fully merited the tribute of Lord Chesterfield, who said of him: "His virtues did honor to human nature; his

writings, justice. A friend to mankind, he asserted their undoubted and unalienable rights and liberties. His works will illustrate his name, and survive him as long as right reason, moral obligation and the true spirit of laws shall be understood, respected and maintained." Indeed, for any lover of liberty today, no book will better repay a reading than Montesquieu's *Spirit of Laws*. His philosophy is a perpetual fountain of freedom, while his epigrammatic style, coruscating and luminous, will forever interest, instruct and delight the cultured mind. Many are the ills we might be spared if modern statesmen would but turn again to him! Thus, he warns: "The deterioration of a government begins almost always by the decay of its principles." And again: "Republics end through luxury; monarchies through poverty." Volumes could tell us no more of human history than he has here said in a single line.

## V.

### CORNEILLE.

Pierre Corneille was the son of a lawyer of Rouen. He was born June 6, 1606. was educated by the Jesuits, and was trained for the law. He practiced that profession for a few years, but soon abandoned it for the calling to which nature had apparently intended he should devote the best years of his life.

To Corneille is accredited the happy discovery of the *soubrette*; and, as Edward Dowden observes, "It was something to replace the old nurse of classic tragedy with the *soubrette*." The *soubrette* is therefore as distinctly French in its creation as the *gracioso* is purely Spanish. Corneille's first play, "*Melite*," appeared in 1629. His next was "*Clitandre*," and was not so good as the first. "*La Veuve*" is better, and according to Fontenelle and La Harpe is the first model of the French higher comedy. "*The Medea*," his next piece, borrowed from Seneca, imparted a new tone of dignity to French tragedy. These works placed him in the front rank of French theatrical writers; but his greater triumphs were to follow.

Seven years after his first production "*The Cid*" appeared, in 1636, and set all France ablaze. The plot was borrowed from Guillen de Castro. It marked an epoch in French drama. The piece was denounced by Richelieu and the French Academy, it has been condemned by such critics as Scudery and Voltaire, and it was warmly defended by La Harpe and others. But it drew tremendously, and still pleases French audiences. The next tragedy is "*Les Horaces*," which is open to the same objections as "*The Cid*," as lacking in the dramatic unities, but in literary style it is reckoned superior to "*The Cid*." He next produced the tragedy of "*Cinna*." In the opinion of many this is Corneille's greatest work. But it, too, is not without its dramatic defects. "*Polyeucte*," a story of Christian martyrdom, grips the heart, and

its character of Pauline is one of the noblest of the French theatre. But Boileau and others objected to it because of its introduction of the mysteries of the Christian faith upon the stage. "Rodogune" was a favorite with Corneille himself, but does not hold the average reader. However, the first act of this play has been highly praised by La Harpe. "Pompey" was more defective than any of its predecessors. "Heraclius" is inferior to Corneille's best literary style, and "Nicomede" is below "Heraclius." No dramatist, indeed, is more uneven in his work than is Corneille. His "Pertharite" was such a failure that he retired from the drama for some years, during which period he rendered into verse the "Imitation of Christ" of Thomas a Kempis. Moliere, with whom he collaborated in the production of one play, drew him from his retirement, but the dramatic work of his later years was uniformly unsuccessful.

The old age of Corneille was spent in poverty—to use his own words—"satiated with glory and hungry for money." Some grateful verses addressed to Louis XIV. were among his last efforts. The king had sent him a gift of money, at the request of Boileau. But two days later, on October 1, 1684, the venerable father of French tragedy passed away. His great rival, Racine, delivered his eulogy before the French Academy, and Moliere referred to him as his master. And so he died, poor in what the world calls wealth, but rich in the glory of an honored name merited so well by a pure and noble life.

Such profound critics as Fontenelle and St. Evremont praise even his minor tragedies. Lucan was his favorite author and his Roman prototype. He borrowed extensively from the Spanish dramatists, as well as from the Roman classics. But his unflinching and unflinching beauty is in his elevated style. He is epic rather than tragic, and more splendid than touching. Corneille is distinguished for noble, masculine thought, for the warmth of his nervous eloquence, for his vivid narration, bold declamation, impressive energy, sonorous rhythm, for the peculiar richness of his genius, the fecundity of his imagination and the grandeur of his lofty sentiments. The French critic Faguet says



that his language is "the most beautiful that ever fell from a French pen; the most masculine, energetic, at once sober and full, that was ever spoken in France." In the language of Professor Blair of Edinburgh, he "united the copiousness of Dryden with the fire of Lucan, and he resembles them also in their faults, in their extravagance and impetuosity." Yet his declamations, observes Dr. Benjamin Wells, "the tirades of Camilla, Augustus, Cornelia, and many another, are supreme in their kind, and will thrill audiences everywhere as long as the antinomies of love and patriotism, honor and duty, perplex men's souls."

Corneille is one of the most quotable of the French authors, and the dignity of his sententious utterance is apparent from these excerpts:

"We triumph without glory when we conquer without danger."—*Le Cid*.

"He who allows himself to be insulted, deserves to be so; and insolence, if unpunished, increases."—Heraclius.

But the best known phrase of all, and one which has rolled like a thunderbolt around the world, is this, from his Heraclius: "Tyrant, step from thy throne, and give place to thy master"—*Tyrans, descends du trone, et fais place a ton maitre!*—a sentiment which one would think more likely to find expression in the Age of Revolutions than in the Age of Louis XIV.

## VI.

### RACINE.

While lacking the copiousness and the heroic grandeur of Corneille's imagination, Jean Racine is undoubtedly the greatest of the French tragic poets, greatly excelling his gifted predecessor in tenderness, and in the uncommon beauty of his versification. Racine is noted for sympathetic power, for his delicate perception of ideal beauty, his exquisite Virgilian grace and majesty, his depth of thought, and his consummate beauty of diction. He is the French Euripides.

Jean Racine was educated by the Port-Royalist teachers at l'Ecole des Granges, and at the College d'Harcourt, where he read and annotated all the Greek and Roman classics, and committed to memory the grand choruses of Sophocles and Euripides. At twenty-three he was a finished and an accomplished scholar. He was presented to the King, and soon formed close friendships with Boileau, Moliere and Furetiere.

His first tragedy, *Le Thebaide*, was presented by Moliere's players in 1664, when the author was twenty-five years of age. He was then pensioned by the King. In the next year his *Alexandre* came out, and attracted wide attention. He showed this play to Corneille, who praised its versification, but advised him to avoid the drama as a field unsuited to his talents.

But the glory of Racine dates from 1667, when he presented his *Andromaque*, which he derived from Euripides. He was at once compared and contrasted with Corneille, and the discussion of their relative merits has continued ever since. It is said that the splendid acting of Mademoiselle de Champmele in the part of Hermione made the play a success. Racine prostrated himself at her feet, in a transport of gratitude; a feeling which, it is said, was soon turned to love, although they were never married. He

afterwards wedded a woman whose material possessions exceeded her mental culture.

In the year 1669 appeared his *Britannicus*. Of this play Hallam says: "Few tragedies on the French, or, indeed, on any stage, save those of Shakespeare, display so great a variety of contrasted character. \* \* \* If he has not reached, as he never did, the peculiar impetuosity of Corneille, nor given to his Romans the grandeur of his predecessor's conception, he is full of lines wherein, as every word is effective, there can hardly be any deficiency of vigor. It is the vigor, indeed, of Virgil, not of Lucan." *Berenice*, his next tragedy, has been likened to Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens*. Corneille attempted, with less success, the same subject at about the same time. His next tragedy, *Bajazet*, falls below the others in beauty of style. Next came *Mithridate*, one of the strongest of his plays. This was followed, in 1674, by *Iphigenie*, which, like the *Andromaque*, is derived from Euripides. In *Phedre*, produced in 1677, he again attempted to surpass Euripides. In this play he borrows more from the Greek than in any other.

At this time, owing, perhaps, to his Puritanical relationships, and for other reasons, Racine appears to have abandoned the stage. He was recalled from his retirement by Madame de Maintenon, who induced him, in 1689, to write *Esther*, a Biblical drama, to be performed by the girl students of St. Cyr. Although possessing no superior dramatic excellence, the piece is touching and beautiful. Louis XIV. applauded its performance, while the great Conde was affected to tears.

Next, in 1691, came another sacred drama, the *Athalie*, far greater than *Iphigenie* or *Britannicus*, and unquestionably standing at the head of all his tragedies, although its author preferred the *Phedre*. *Athalie* was praised by Boileau, and by others among Racine's great contemporaries, but was not generally appreciated for some years. Voltaire has repeatedly declared *Athalie* to be the "Chef d'OEuvre" of the French stage.

Racine's tragedies are all written in Alexandrine verse. In literary style, Hallam places Racine next to Virgil among the

poets. A great French critic, La Harpe, in his "Eloge de Racine," thus eloquently summarizes the merits of this mighty genius: "His expression is always so happy and so natural, that it seems as if no other could be found; and every word is placed in such a manner that we cannot fancy any other place to have suited it as well. The structure of his style is such that nothing could be displaced, nothing added, nothing retrenched; it is one unalterable whole. Even his incorrectnesses are often but sacrifices required by good taste, nor would anything be more difficult than to write over again a line of Racine. No one has enriched the language with a greater number of turns of phrase; no one is bold with more felicity and discretion, or figurative with more grace and propriety; no one has handled with more command an idiom often rebellious, or with more skill an instrument always difficult; no one has better understood that delicacy of style which must not be mistaken for feebleness, and is, in fact, but that air of ease which conceals from the reader the labor of the work and the artifices of the composition; or better managed the variety of cadences, the resources of rhythm, the association and deduction of ideas. In short, if we consider that his perfection in these respects may be opposed to that of Virgil, and that he spoke a language less flexible, less poetical and less harmonious, we shall readily believe that Racine is, of all mankind, the one to whom nature has given the greatest talent for versification."

In his old age, Racine lost the favor of the court, a fact attributed by some to his memoir on the miseries of the people. He died in 1699, at the age of sixty.

## VII.

### MOLIERE.

Jean Baptiste Poquelin (who assumed the name of Moliere) was born in Paris, January 15, 1622, the son of a tradesman, and died in the city of his birth, at the age of fifty-one. He was educated by the Jesuits at the College de Clermont. In 1643 he abandoned the minor office which he then held, and chose the stage as a career. As a result of two unfortunate theatrical ventures, he was imprisoned for debt.

In 1646 he organized a company of players, and for the next ten or twelve years he traveled over France as an actor and stage manager, learning to adapt and arrange plays, and, above all, learning human nature. Returning to Paris in 1658, he played before the King, and gained a court popularity which he never lost.

In 1659, at the age of thirty-seven, he presented his first satire on cultured society, and inaugurated a new era in French comedy. In *L'Avare* he depicted the vice of avarice, and created the character of Harpagon. His *L'Ecole des Femmes* is a most diverting comedy. He revenged himself upon the petty critics of this play by publishing that keen satire, *La Critique d l'Ecole des Femmes*, in which he pilloried the pedantic coterie of the Hotel Rambouillet. It has been called "the first great serious comedy of the French theatre."

Moliere's *Misanthrope* is another famous comedy, in the opinion of critics second only to his *Tartuffe*. *Les Femmes Savantes* is a highly amusing comedy, lambasting the poetasters and literary pretenders among the literary ladies and female fops of Paris—a numerous tribe, now widely dispersed, and by no means extinct. *Les Precieuses Ridicules* is another play of the same character.

But *Tartuffe* is his masterpiece, and the greatest effort of his genius. It stands alone among the world's great comedies, with none worthy to be named beside it. *Tartuffe* is the comedy

of religious hypocrisy, in which he unmasks and excoriates those whose love of God is manifested only in hatred for their fellow-men; whose hands are clasped in prayer only when they are not clasping a neighbor's purse; and who piously roll their jaundiced eyes to Heaven, while giving their festering hearts to Hell. "No one of Moliere's comedies," says Brander Matthews, "is more characteristic than *Tartuffe*, more liberal in its treatment of our common humanity, braver in its assault upon hypocrisy, or more masterly in technique." In this play, Moliere has ascended to the full height of his towering genius to crush with the pervasive power of his resistless humor and blighting irony that lowest type of social excrescence, the sour-faced, psalm-singing, whining, lying fraud who steals "the livery of the court of Heaven to serve the Devil in." He exposed its smug and smirking treachery. He smote its villainously dissembling sanctity. Moliere did not need to cry out with Byron:

"Oh for a forty-parson power to chant  
Thy praise, Hypocrisy! Oh for a hymn  
Loud as the virtues thou dost loudly vaunt,  
Not practice!"

Moliere had the power, and he wielded it, in his matchless serio-comic style, like a cat-o'-nine-tails in the hands of an offended deity. He dragged the slimy wretches from the sanctuaries they had polluted, from the temples they had disgraced, from the pews they had befouled, from the altars they had profaned, dishonored and betrayed, and he flayed them without mercy. He gave the rogues the bastinado, without sparing corn or bunion. He singed the wool from the sheeps' clothing which they wore, and bared the ravening wolves. He lanced the most malignant ulcer on the face of human society, and he cauterized the wound. Naturally, the French Pecksniffs were offended. These whited sepulchres belched forth their carrion criticisms in life, and pursued him vindictively in death. But *Tartuffe* yet points the detecting finger of scorn, while Moliere still lives, and mocks, and smiles!

Another fraud laid bare by his unsparing pen was the medical quack. The quack doctor and the quack preacher usually go

hand in hand. It is impossible to detect the one without perceiving the other. Moliere saw them both with an undimmed eye, and he lashed them with a fearless hand. His four medical comedies are masterpieces of their kind. He was acting a part in the last one, *Le Malade imaginaire*, when suddenly stricken on the stage. He was removed to his home, and a half hour later he was dead. His brave spirit had gone where the quack doctors have sent very many, but whither, there is reason to believe, no quack preacher has ever followed.

Moliere will forever be read and enjoyed for his vivacious brilliancy, his humorous dialogue, his bright, scintillating and inimitable gayety, his elegant, polite and polished satire, his incisive ridicule, his wholesomeness, and his skillful delineation of character. His innocent mirth and pleasantry charm with a bewitching subtlety that dies not with the flight of time. Moliere would be known as the French Plautus, but for the fact that he surpasses by an immeasurable distance his Roman model. He hardly equals the gentlemanly elegance of Terence, but he surpasses him in every other respect. He wrote better comedies than Shakespeare, and no English comic writer touches him in spirited and easy versification.

In the words of the distinguished Dr. Blair, "The dramatic author in whom the French glory most, and whom they justly place at the head of all their comedians, is the famous Moliere. There is, indeed, no author in all the fruitful and distinguished age of Louis XIV., who has attained a higher reputation than Moliere, or who has more nearly reached the summit of perfection in his own art, according to the judgment of all the French critics. Voltaire boldly pronounces him to be the most eminent comic poet of any age or country; nor, perhaps, is this the decision of mere partiality; for, taking him upon the whole, I know none who deserves to be preferred to him." To which we may add the observation of Prof. Wells, that "no dramatist, save perhaps Shakespeare and Aristophanes, ever joined so much wit to so much seriousness as did Moliere." His name will forever stand enshrined with those of Goethe, Shakespeare, Lope de Vega and Sophocles, monarchs of the stage, and shining servitors of truth.

## VIII.

### LA FONTAINE.

Jean de La Fontaine, "the French Æsop," was the greatest of modern fabulists. Florian and others have followed him in vain. Born in 1621, he was one year older than his friend Moliere, but he survived the great master of French comedy twenty-two years. Although he was intimate with Racine, Boileau, and other great literary lights of the time, it is said that Moliere was one of the few who grasped the true literary significance and value of La Fontaine's work. Although he led a reckless life, his last years were given over to religious penance, and when he died the saintly, sweet-souled Fenelon lamented his death in eulogistic strain.

La Fontaine was born at the historic site of Chateau-Thierry. There his father was superintendent of forests. The junior La Fontaine afterwards had an opportunity to fill his father's office, but the forestry service did not appeal to him. Indeed, nothing in the nature of labor or responsibility found favor in his eyes. He refused to bind himself to any kind of occupation, and finally fell to writing poetry. He dedicated his "Adonis" to the minister, Foquet, and was at once received into the minister's household. Upon the fall of the minister he was successively patronized by a number of rich and noble ladies who were delighted with the salacious tales he wrote after the manner of Boccaccio—the "Contes et nouvelles en vers." As he grew older he gradually abandoned his "Contes", and devoted his talents to the "Fables."

No French writer of the seventeenth century has retained a more widespread and continuous popularity. The Fables have been translated into every language, and are now reckoned a part of the world's best literature. These writings display a certain pleasing intermixture of archness and vivacity with much solid and serious wisdom. He manifests a perfection of elegant beauty which almost rivals Phaedrus; although he is sometimes redund-



ant, and often lacks the perspicuity and ease of his Roman model, whom he greatly excels, however, in the richness of his humor, and in his versatile amiability. His beauties are thus summarized by a modern critic, who says of his Fables: "The graceful liveliness of their narration, the unrestrained naturalism of their description, the homely wisdom of their unobtruded moral, the boldness of their covert political teaching (especially in later years), the shrewd analysis and observation of human motive, has been a perpetual delight to generations." Upon the whole, his Fables may be said to in some measure make amends for the shocking impropriety of his "Contes," which were often too highly seasoned for even the Grand Monarch himself, who made La Fontaine promise to be good before consenting to his election to the Academy. He was a roistering, mad-cap rake, but a good fellow withal, and could say things that stick in the memory. Here is one: "Every newspaper editor owes tribute to the devil." And he might have added—but why pursue a subject so painful? At any rate, as he says elsewhere, "Nothing can satisfy the fastidious." And again he says: "Beware so long as you live, of judging people by appearances"—

Garde-toi, tant que tu vivras,  
De juger des gens sur la mine!

Another phrase which has become a proverb: "Better a living beggar than a buried emperor." Indeed, as Lessing tells us, in his "Nathan der Weise": "The real beggar is the true and only king"—

Der wahre Bettler ist

Doch einzig und allein der wahre Koenig.

Which suggests to us, as La Fontaine says in another fable, "In everything we ought to consider the end." And in another he says: "Alas! we see that the small have always suffered for the follies of the great." This, too, is very wise: "Gentleness succeeds better than violence." So, also: "We read on the forehead of those who are surrounded by a foolish luxury, that Fortune sells what she is thought to give." But we cannot grasp La Fontaine merely in excerpts. One must read the Fables.

## IX.

### VOLTAIRE.

Francois Arouet (who took the name of Voltaire), the son of a Paris notary, was born in 1694, and at the age of ten was sent to a Jesuit college, where he remained for seven years and attained a vast proficiency in the classics. His father destined him for the bar, and after leaving the Jesuit school, at the age of seventeen, he devoted three years to the study of law, but finally gave his whole thought to the classics. He began writing clever satires and graceful verses. Shortly after the death of Louis XIV., Voltaire was accused of writing satires against the Duke of Orleans. He was exiled from Paris, and upon his return was committed to the Bastile for a period of eleven months. While in prison he planned his *Henriade*, the leading epic poem of the French language, committing the lines to memory as he composed them, inasmuch as he was not permitted the use of writing materials.

For eight years after his release he remained in Paris, writing for the stage. His first tragedy, the *Œdipus*, in the manner of Sophocles, was a brilliant success. Because of a quarrel with a person of rank he was again committed to the Bastile, where he remained for six months, and was released only on condition that he leave France. He repaired to England, where he remained for two years and eight months, winning the favor of the King and Queen, and enjoying the companionship of the great literary personages of the time. While in England he published the *Henriade*, which celebrates the triumph of Henry IV. over the arms of the League. He now began his history of Charles XII. of Sweden, collecting the materials from the Swedish ambassador at the English court.

Upon his return to Paris, Voltaire applied himself to financial

speculation, and gained an independent fortune. But he did not cease to write, especially for the stage. He composed, in all, twenty-six tragedies, all of which met with a high degree of popular favor. His *Zaire* was popular on the Swedish stage for many years. Again brought into trouble because of his writings, he left Paris in 1734. Considerations of personal safety induced him to fix his residence at Cirey, near the French frontier. His income from his investments was now about \$15,000 per year, a large sum for that day. He continued to reside at this place for fifteen years, leading a life of cultured ease, writing for the stage, and letting fly, in every direction, the shafts of his ridicule, flooding Europe with pamphlets, and making of himself, generally, an international character. Europe shook with his laughter; courts and kingdoms trembled at his frown.

In July, 1750, he accepted the invitation of Frederick the Great to fix his residence at the court of Berlin, thus giving offense to the King of France. While at Berlin he completed his history of Louis XIV., his greatest historical work, which set up a new standard of historical composition in France. It was this work that caused Madame du Duffand to say of Voltaire, that "he has invented history." At the end of a little more than two years he quarreled with Frederick, and barely made his escape from Germany in safety. Louis XV. declined to permit his return to Paris. He now located in Switzerland, and his retreat near Geneva became a mecca for literary pilgrims from all lands. Among those who visited him here was Oliver Goldsmith. Here he lived for more than twenty years.

Following the Lisbon earthquake of 1755, Voltaire wrote a poem entitled "The Disaster of Lisbon." In this poem, and in his novel, "Candide," he denies that all the events which take place in the universe form part of a divine plan. These works, together with his part in the "Encyclopaedia," and numerous pamphlets and satirical writings, brought upon him the charge of irreligion.

At the age of eighty-four he visited Paris for the last time. He was received with the utmost enthusiasm. He was lionized

by the multitude, and fawned upon by the great. A special meeting of the French Academy was held, to deliver eulogies in his honor. At the Theatre Francaise he witnessed the first presentation of his tragedy "Irene," and his bust was publicly crowned on the stage, in his presence. He was carried to his coach in triumph on the shoulders of the crowd, and he returned to his apartments never to come forth again. He died May 30, 1778. Before his death he wrote these words: "I die adoring God, loving my friends, not hating my enemies, and detesting superstition."

While on this visit to Paris, Benjamin Franklin, the representative of the infant American republic, took his young grandson to Voltaire and besought his blessing upon the child. Voltaire placed his hands upon the boy's head and pronounced, in English, the words: "God and Liberty."

Voltaire always denied the charge of atheism. He wrote to d'Alembert: "I want you to crush the Infamous. \* \* \* You will understand that I mean superstition only. Religion I love and respect." But what did he mean by religion? In what sort of God did he believe? What was his moral code? Voltaire's private life was one of unrestrained license. He believed and practiced, from his earliest manhood, the doctrine of "free love," continuously and persistently. While pleading for liberty and law, he was loyal to no government under the sun. What appeared to be a beacon-light of liberty in his hand, became an incendiary's torch in the hands of his followers. But he was one of the colossal figures of his day, and no writer, in any age of the world's history, ever did more to unsettle the minds of men. As Lord Macaulay said, in his essay on Frederick the Great: "Voltaire could not build; he could only pull down; he was the very Vitruvius of ruin. He has bequeathed to us not a single doctrine to be called by his name, not a single addition to the stock of our positive knowledge. But no human teacher ever left behind him so vast and terrible a wreck of truths and falsehoods, of things noble and things base, of things useful and things pernicious."

Voltaire was an adept at flashy epigram. Thus, his saying:

"If there were no God, it would be necessary to invent him." As if the finite could invent the Infinite! Such remarks illustrate the shallowness of his philosophy. Nor do they prove his belief in God. They prove the contrary. Such a phrase is on a par with Robert G. Ingersoll's blasphemous witticism: "An honest God is the noblest work of man."

Voltaire's essay on epic poetry is good. Some of his tragedies are superb. It is worthy of remark that his tragedies, for the most part, display an exalted morality and a truly religious sentiment. His *History of the Age of Louis XIV.* is one of the greatest historical works ever produced in France. But his *Henriade*, the publication of which caused him to be hailed at the time as a second Virgil, has not survived the mature and sober judgment of posterity. Indeed, Voltaire is chiefly of interest now, only as a mighty precursor of revolution; a revolution which enthroned in Paris a naked woman as the Goddess of Reason, and engulfed Europe for twenty years in blood. But that sanguinary catastrophe would have found other heralds, if Voltaire had never lived. It had to be. Where there are bastiles, and lese majestie, and lettres de cachet, where government is both tyrannical and corrupt, and society is rotten to the core, there must be reformation or there will be revolution. And France could not reform. It was too late. The disease had gone too far. The hour of dissolution approached; the hour of death for organized society had arrived; and only after death could a new life arise.

## X.

### HUGO.

VICTOR Hugo was born in 1802, the year in which Napoleon Bonaparte was elected First Consul for life, and his career was prolonged to within fifteen years of the close of the nineteenth century. Reckoned in terms of American chronology, he was born one year before Thomas Jefferson accomplished the Louisiana Purchase, and he died in the first year of Grover Cleveland's first term as President of the United States. In his infancy the dying thunders of the first Revolution echoed in his ears, and he lived to see France recover from the crushing disaster of the Franco-Prussian War. His youth witnessed the splendors of the first Napoleon, and his old age saw the scepter fall from the nerveless hand of Napoleon III.

Hugo was thirteen years of age when the dream of the great Napoleon was extinguished at Waterloo. He was a young man, distinguishing himself in literary work, when the long reign of George III. of England came to an end, and was known among the most distinguished French authors when Queen Victoria assumed the throne of England in 1837. He flourished during nearly the whole period of her long and illustrious reign, was personally acquainted with nearly all the great English men of letters of the Victorian era, and survived nearly all the great names of that glorious literary period. He published his "Les Miserables" in 1862, just as the opening scenes were being enacted in the bloody drama of the great American Civil War, and although he had then lived longer than Shakespeare lived, he still had nearly a half century of active life before him.

Modern history exhibits no other character who witnessed so mighty a succession of events, who bore an active and an honorable part in the stirring scenes through which he passed, and

who was capable of intelligently observing, as he observed, the whole of the vast panorama of the Age of Revolutions. Little wonder that his 80th birthday, in 1882, was celebrated throughout the civilized world! Rightly, indeed, did he inspire the sonnet of Alfred Tennyson, who thus saluted him:

“Victor in poesy! Victor in romance!  
Cloud-weaver of phantasmal hopes and fears,  
French of the French, and lord of human tears!  
Child-lover, bard, whose fame-lit laurels glance,  
Darkening the wreaths of all that would advance  
Beyond our strait their claim to be thy peers!  
Weird Titan, by thy wintry weight of years

As yet unbroken! Stormy voice of France,” etc.

Victor Hugo was the son of one of Napoleon's generals. His childhood was spent in Spain, and his early education was superintended by his mother, a cultured woman, from whom, no doubt, he drew his early predilections for literature. His “Odes et Poesies” appeared in 1822, when he was but twenty years of age. Louis XVIII. at once granted him a pension, and the young poet promptly contracted a happy marriage, the beginning of a domestic life which was to sustain him in all his trials, and which proved a model of propriety, purity and peace. Throughout his long life his literary work never ceased. He is the author of many dramas, novels and poems. To English readers he is best known for his novels, doubtless because of the difficulty of adequately rendering French verse into English; but among his own countrymen his claims to immortality, though amply sustained by his romances, will rest chiefly upon his verse. He was one of the greatest lyrical bards of all time.

Living in the France of the nineteenth century, and possessing his ardent temperament, it was not to be expected that so great a genius could be dissociated from the political life of the period. In 1848 he was a member of the Chamber of Deputies. Following Napoleon's coup d'etat of 1851 he went into exile, and in the next year appeared his “Napoleon the Little,” a fierce attack

on the king, followed by the "Les Chatiments," in the same satirical vein, which has since become a classic. In his exile on the islands of Jersey and Guernsey he redoubled his literary efforts, and in 1862 his vast romance of "Les Miserables" was published simultaneously in ten languages, an event unexampled in the history of literature. In 1871, with the collapse of the Third Empire, he was back in France, and a member of the National Assembly at Bordeaux. In 1876 he was elected Senator for life. He was now poet laureate of the Third Republic. Advancing age brought no diminution of his literary powers, and he was at the height of his glory when he died, on May 22, 1885. Lanson wrote: "When Victor Hugo took his leave of the world, it seemed as if he had carried French poetry with him." His body was allowed to lie in state beneath the Arc de Triomphe. His funeral surpassed in magnificence any royal pageant, and he was interred in the pantheon, the relics of the patron saint of Paris, Sainte Genevieve, being removed to provide a place for his remains.

C. C. Starkweather says: "We might demonstrate that he was the greatest lyrical poet of France. His great novels were prose epics." Another adds: "He is perhaps the greatest master of language that we know; a great writer, rather than a great author, and therefore the more sure of an enduring democratic fame. He has formed the rhetorical and poetic taste of three generations of French youth. All schools of French verse that have arisen in the last half-century have united to call him their father."

Victor Hugo was not a great statesman. He was not a great philosopher. He had not the intellect of a Diderot nor the scholarship of a Renan. He was not even a very successful politician. But he has touched the heart of the world by his intensity of pathos and his warmth of universal sympathy. He is a writer of great rhetorical richness and rhythmical beauty, and of limitless imagination. He is unsurpassed in vivid descriptive power. In sheer tempestuous force of expression we do not know his mas-



ter. His literary style is in the highest degree oratorical, and we therefore naturally find him to be an orator second to no Frenchman of his generation. His oration upon the centenary of Voltaire, in 1878, is a masterpiece of eloquence. His oration on the death of Honore de Balzac is almost as great. A fine specimen of his forensic power is found in his oration against capital punishment. In 1851 his son, the publisher of a newspaper, was prosecuted for lack of respect for the laws, because of his report of a legal execution which occurred in circumstances peculiarly brutal. Victor Hugo defended his son before a jury. His speech stands to this day as probably the most powerful arraignment of the death penalty that ever fell from the lips of man.

He referred to the cruel and vengeful laws of capital punishment as "those laws that dip the finger in human blood to write the commandment, Thou shalt not kill; those impious laws that make one lose faith in humanity when they strike the guilty, and that cause one to doubt God when they smite the innocent." But the thrilling climax of this wonderful effort was reached when he said: "Yes, I declare it, this old and unwise law of retaliation, this law which requires blood for blood, I have combatted it all my life—all my life, gentlemen of the jury, and as long as I have breath I will combat it; with all my efforts as a writer I will combat it, and with all my acts and votes as a legislator; I declare it (here he pointed to a crucifix hanging on the wall of the court room) before that Victim of the death penalty who is there, who sees us and who hears us! I swear it before that cross, where, two thousand years ago, as an everlasting testimony for generations to come, human law nailed the Law Divine!"

Hugo was also an adept in the use of the crayon. The masterwork of his artistry in this regard is his "Execution of John Brown." The volatile French author had been deeply affected by the anti-slavery movement in the United States. When John Brown was sent to the gallows, Hugo summoned his crayon in aid of his pen, and produced the gruesome sketch of a tattered figure dangling from a gibbet in the moonlight. He inscribed it

"Pro Christo sicut Christus"—and under it he wrote the single word, "Ecce." The drawing created a profound sensation in America, and in the early part of the Civil War it was used throughout the Northern States in aid of recruiting. He hated slavery as he hated capital punishment. Later he wrote: "The scaffold is the friend of slavery. The shadow of a gallows is projected over the fratricidal war of the United States;" and he referred to "this monstrous penalty of death, the glory of which it is to have raised upon the earth two crucifixes, that of Jesus Christ in the old world and that of John Brown in the new."

PART SIX

GREAT GERMAN AUTHORS

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- I. GOETHE.
- II. SCHILLER.
- III. LESSING.
- IV. KANT.
- V. RICHTER.
- VI. KLOPSTOCK.
- VII. WIELAND.
- VIII. HERDER.
- IX. HEINE.

From 1780 to 1830 Germany has produced all the ideas of our historic age; and for half a century still, perhaps for a whole century, our great work will be to think them out again. \* \* \* The philosophic German genius, which, having engendered a new metaphysics, theology, poetry, literature, linguistic science, an exegesis, erudition, descends now into the sciences and continues its evolution. No more original spirit, more universal, more fertile in consequences of every scope and species, more capable of transforming and reforming everything, has appeared for three hundred years. It is of the same order as that of the Renaissance and of the Classical Age. It, like them, connects itself with the great works of contemporary intelligence, appears in all civilized lands, is propagated with the same inward qualities, but under different forms. It, like them, is one of the epochs of the world's history.

—(Hippolyte Adolphe Taine, "History of English Literature;" Bk. V., Chap. IV.; translated from the French, by Henri Van Laun.

## I.

### GOETHE.

The German Apollo, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, the greatest literary genius of the Germanic race, is, after Aristotle, the world's most perfect specimen of the universal mind. He is of the select company of the super-great. "Of great men among so many millions of noted men," said that great Englishman, Thomas Carlyle, "it is computed that in our time there have been but two; one in the practical, another in the speculative province: Napoleon Bonaparte and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe—Goethe intrinsically of much more unquestionable merit."

Goethe united in rare degree the pristine fires of Homer, the melancholy grandeur of Dante, and the subtle witchery of Shakespeare. But he possessed a perennial freshness of fancy and a certain sweetness of melody, combined with a statuesque dignity all his own. In sheer force and scope of intellect he surpasses any man who ever dipped a pen in the etherial fountains of immortal verse. The learned French critic, Taine, calls him "the master of all modern minds," and "the father and promoter of all lofty modern ideas." Another of the most brilliant minds of France, Madame de Stael, has observed: "Goethe may be taken as the representative of all German literature. He unites everything which distinguishes Germany, and nothing is so remarkable as a kind of imaginative power, in which Italians, English, or French, have no part."

This prince of poesy was born at Frankfort-on-the-Main, Aug. 28, 1749, the son of lawyer who was a man of wealth and position. His mother was a woman of rare talent, and her influence upon the development of Goethe's genius may be readily traced. From her, in large measure, he imbibed the gift of storytelling, and his precocious fondness for the classics. At the tender age of eight he had already acquired some knowledge of Greek,

Latin, French and Italian, and he later perfected himself in Hebrew. In vain did Goethe's father seek to bind the towering intellect of this young mental giant with the meshes of the law. He studied law, indeed, but it was the law of life, the law of light. He soon passed beyond the barren confines of civil jurisprudence to the laws of time and space and planetary motion, to the laws of growth and decay, of beauty and of truth; of the airy filaments of thought, elementary spirits—"film of flame who flit and wave in eddying motion! birth and the grave, an infinite ocean, a web ever growing, a life ever glowing, ply at Time's whizzing loom, and weave the vesture of God" (Faust, Sc. 1); of the law, indeed, as Richard Hooker saw it—"Of Law there can be no less acknowledged than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world. All things in heaven and earth do her homage, —the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempted from her power."

After a few years at Leipsic, Goethe was sent to complete his education at Strasburg. Here he met Herder, who exerted a powerful influence upon his literary character. Among the incidents of his student life at Strasburg, Goethe tells us that Herder upon one occasion produced a German translation of Goldsmith's "Vicar of Wakefield," which Herder insisted upon reading aloud to a select group of students before permitting them to peruse it. The touching English tale, classic in its simplicity, made a deep impression upon the sensitive soul of Goethe. From his earliest youth he had been producing lyrics and love-songs of great sweetness and beauty, but attempted no great serious work until he left the university.

Shortly after his return from Strasburg, in 1772, he published his "Goetz von Berlichingen." Its success was widespread and immediate. He was at once acknowledged as the foremost poet of Germany. "Goetz" was translated by Walter Scott, and soon gained a European fame. Soon after this triumph Goethe met the young prince Karl August of Weimar; a meeting which ripened into a friendship of fifty-five years, and which was to be severed only by death.

In 1774 Goethe's "Sorrows of Werther" appeared. It took Europe by storm. When Napoleon Bonaparte visited Goethe at Weimar in 1806, after the battle of Jena, he told the poet that he had read his "Sorrows of Werther" seven times. Napoleon was so impressed upon this occasion that, addressing Goethe, he exclaimed: "Vous etes un homme"—You are a man! He afterward invited the German poet to Paris and decorated him with the Legion of Honor.

Karl August became Grand Duke of Saxe-Weimar in 1775, and at once invited Goethe to become a member of his court. The poet accepted the post of Privy Councillor, and became, successively, Minister of Finance and Prime Minister. Weimar at once became the literary center of Germany, if not of Europe, and here the genius of Goethe shone with undimmed splendor for fifty-seven years—until his death, in 1832. In 1825 the fiftieth anniversary of his residence at Weimar was celebrated, all Europe joining in the jubilee. A medal was struck in England, bearing an inscription from one of his recent poems, "Ohne Hast, ohne Rast"—without haste, without rest—and was sent to him with a letter signed by Southey, Wordsworth, Carlyle, Scott, Lockhart, and others.

When he had been at Weimar for more than a decade, Goethe procured from Karl August an extended leave of absence. He now undertook his famous Italian journey and remained in Italy for two years. Many of his finest creations are the fruits of his Italian tour. Upon his return he published, in rapid succession, his dramas "Egmont," "Iphigenia" and "Tasso," together with many poems of an unusual character.

In 1794 he formed the friendship of Schiller, a friendship which lasted until the death of Schiller in 1805. "Literature has no more perfect relation to show between two great men than this between Goethe and Schiller," says Hjalmar H. Boyesen, in his "Life of Goethe." "No jealousy, no passing disagreement, clouded the beautiful serenity of their intercourse. They met, as it were, only upon the altitudes of the soul, where no small and petty passions have the power to reach. Their correspondence,

which has been published, is a noble monument to the worth of both. The earnestness with which they discuss the principles of their art, the profound conscientiousness and high-bred courtesy with which they criticize each other's works, and their generous rivalry in the loftiest excellence, have no parallel in the entire history of literature."

In 1796 Goethe published his "Wilhelm Meister," which added greatly to his fame. This work was translated into English by Thomas Carlyle. In the following year appeared "Hermann und Dorothea," one of the sweetest of pastoral tales. But, as is well known, Goethe's greatest work is "Faust." The "History of Dr. Johann Fausten" made its first appearance in literature at the book-fair held in Frankfort-on-the-Main, Goethe's home city, in the year 1587. In the next year the theme was seized upon in England by Marlowe, who made it the basis of his drama, "The Tragedy of Dr. Faustus." In Germany the same subject was twice attempted by Lessing. Friederich Muller dramatized it, and Klinger made it the subject of a romance.

Goethe, in 1773, just one hundred and eighty-six years from the date of the story's first appearance in the city of his birth, began work upon his "Faust," which was to be the subject of his thought for almost sixty years, and thereafter to become the monument of his undying fame. He published the first part in 1808, and the second part, completed when he had but a few months of life before him, was not published until after his death. When he sealed the manuscript of the second part, he remarked that it was of little consequence what he did thereafter, or if he did anything at all; that his life's work was done. His last words were these: "Let the light enter." And so he winged his flight to the regions of eternal light. "In him," we may say with Bayard Taylor, "there is no unfilled promise, no fragmentary destiny; he stands as complete and symmetrical as the Parthenon;" and the world with one accord agrees with George Henry Lewes that Goethe truly earns the title "Great."

Goethe by no means confined his work to literature and art. His intellect was truly Protean. He was one of the most profound



scientific students of his day. He wrote much upon scientific subjects. He made discoveries in anatomy, botany and geology. He made valuable studies in optics. His intellect was omniverous. Nothing was too lofty for its reach, or too deep for its mighty grasp. "He saw nature in her grand unity," as Prof. Boyesen says, "and his penetrating vision saw the great causal chain which unites her most varied phenomena." Goethe himself has said: "As a poet I am a polytheist; as a naturalist, a pantheist; as a moral man, a deist; and in order to express my mind I need all these forms." Writing of the period of Goethe, in his "History of English Literature," M. Taine, the French critic and philosopher, says: "The human mind, quitting its individual sentiments to adopt sentiments really felt, and finally all possible sentiments, found its pattern in the great Goethe, who by his Tasso, Iphigenia, Divan, his second part of Faust, became a citizen of all nations and a contemporary of all ages, seemed to live at pleasure at every point of time and place, and gave an idea of universal mind."

His critical faculty was most astonishing, and his literary judgments will forever stand as the law from which there is no appeal. We may glimpse his method in the following utterance: "The prime quality of the real critic," he writes, "is sympathy. There is no other approach to a man or a race. Men rarely understand that which they hate, but they rarely fail to understand that which they love." All which is as true as the Golden Rule.

Goethe has been blamed for his want of "patriotism." When the French hordes were ravaging the lands beyond the Rhine, when the world was shaken with revolutions on every hand, when the very ground thrilled beneath the tread of the German legions marching to the defense of Fatherland, when all Germany was ringing with the warsongs of Koerner, Goethe's lyre was silent—or rather let us say that his lyre, like that of Anacreon, had no "bloody string."

Let Goethe answer. He does answer, in these words to Soret: "I am no war-like nature, and have no war-like sense; war-songs would have been a mask which would have fitted my face badly. I have never affected anything in poetry. I have never uttered

anything which I have not experienced and which has not urged me to production. I have composed love-songs when I loved! How could I write songs of hate, without hating? And, between ourselves, I did not hate the French; although I thanked God when we were rid of them. How could I, to whom culture and barbarism alone are of importance, hate a nation which is among the most cultivated of the earth, and to which I owe so much of my own culture? Altogether, national hatred is a peculiar thing, and you will always find it strongest at the lowest stage of culture." Here is the soul of German culture speaking to the world to-day, as it spoke a hundred years ago! For culture speaks all languages and flies all flags. Here Goethe rises to the true height of his majestic character, lifting the hand only in blessing—not to strike! So do we view him now, in the mellow light of a hundred years. Casting its rays across the abyss of a century, the shining soul of Goethe, gleaming from his far Olympian height, with golden voice still pleads for beauties that shall never die, for forms that saber-thrusts shall never mar, for songs that ring above the battle-cry, for culture that is born of peace.

## II.

### SCHILLER.

From the perusal of Goethe the mind naturally turns to Schiller, the second name in the glorious galaxy of Weimar, and Germany's "poet of liberty." Johann Christoph Friederich von Schiller was born at Marbach in 1759 (the year in which the poet Robert Burns was born), and was ten years younger than Goethe.

"These names," says a recent writer, speaking of Goethe and Schiller, "are household words. Prolific as each of these immortals was, more has been written about them than they ever wrote about anything. Wiseacres have 'peeped and botanized', pedants have oracularly analyzed, critics have viewed and reviewed. It is as if one should try to put the Andes or the Himalayas under a microscope, as if one should try to catch the roar of Niagara in a phonograph. Goethe and Schiller: they stand side by side, great beacon-lights of German poesy. And not German poesy alone. They are Titans of world-genius, crowned kings of universal literature, known to every school-boy and poet and philosopher of two continents. Safe in the heart of humanity, the ages will be their heirs. They are on the heights with Homer and Sophocles, Milton and Shakespeare, 'like gods together,' treasured by mankind."

Schiller's father, an honest and industrious man, but in humble circumstances, had been a surgeon in the Bavarian army, in the service of the Duke of Wurtemberg, and was earning his living as superintendent of the Duke's gardens when the poet was born. Young Schiller was intended for the pulpit, but was obliged to forego that ambition when conscripted for the ducal military academy at Stuttgart. where he was subjected to an irksome and hateful military discipline, so senseless, brutalizing and repulsive as to kindle the fires of rebellion in his poetic soul. He sought surcease in the writings of Rousseau, and devoured

with avidity Wieland's translation of Shakespeare and Goethe's "Sorrows of Werther." Completely at war with his surroundings, and sovereignly detesting the noxious militaristic atmosphere of the time and place, he yearned to strike a blow for freedom, and thus it was that literary ambitions gripped his heart.

After some years of mental anguish in the military straight-jacket, assuaged only by the literary labors which he pursued in secret, Schiller was graduated from the academy, and went forth at a salary of \$8 per month, as an army surgeon, in the service of the Duke whom he so cordially hated. But the hour of retribution was near. On January 13, 1782, Schiller's first play, "The Robbers," was performed at Mannheim. It was a declaration of war against civilization as it then existed, and was the first bugle-note in Schiller's lifelong battle-cry of freedom, the echoes of which have reverberated in German ears for more than a hundred years. Schiller journeyed secretly to Mannheim to witness the performance of his play. He was undetected. He repeated the offense, and the Duke placed him under arrest for a period of two weeks and promulgated an order designed to prevent Schiller from writing anything in future excepting medical treatises. The Duke could as easily have stopped a whirl-wind with a sword-thrust. Schiller asked to be released from the ducal service. The Duke refused, and Schiller fled to Mannheim, September 17, 1782.

Still pursued by the Duke, he found refuge on the private estate of Frau von Wolzogen. In this retreat he remained until July, 1783, working diligently the while, completing his "Love and Intrigue," and formulating his great drama, "Don Carlos." He then returned to Mannheim to accept the post of "poet of the theatre," under contract to write three dramas a year. After an unsatisfactory and rather precarious existence for nearly two years, he left Mannheim, in 1785, going first to Darmstadt, where he first met Goethe's patron, Karl August, "the German Maecenas," who gave him an honorary title as Ducal Court Counsellor. Thence he betook himself to Leipsic, where he spent some time with Korner and Huber. He removed with Korner to Dresden. There he completed his "Don Carlos" and wrote some of his best

poems. The publication of "Don Carlos" greatly augmented Schiller's reputation, especially in France, where it was thought to accord with the spirit of the French Revolution, and in consequence the honor of French citizenship was formally bestowed on Schiller in 1792.

In July, 1787, Schiller repaired to Weimar, then famous as the German literary capital. Goethe was still absent on his Italian journey, and they did not meet until 1788. They did not become friends until some years after their first meeting, Schiller having criticised Goethe's "Egmont," and Goethe having passed some strictures on "The Robbers."

Following the completion of "Don Carlos" Schiller first essayed historical writing, in his "Revolt of the Netherlands." The work is characteristic of his mode of thought. Freedom breathes in every line. Owing to the influence of Goethe, Schiller was now appointed as a professor of history in the University of Jena. His lectures were immediately popular. While at Jena he wrote his great historical work, "History of the Thirty Years War." He had now set a new style for historical writing in Germany, and had in some measure accomplished for German literature what Voltaire did for French literature in his "Age of Louis XIV." But the chief value of Schiller's vast historical labors came from the knowledge they imparted to him in regard to the great characters and events of that stormy period. Had he not composed this history it is doubtful if he could have written "Wallenstein." At any rate there is little likelihood that he would have done so.

Notwithstanding his fame, Schiller's debts were pressing, and he began to suffer from overwork. He indulged a fatal habit of working all night, and sleeping only in the forenoon. At this juncture friends came to his rescue with financial aid. He relinquished his professorship, but redoubled his efforts on "Wallenstein," in which he was aided by the constructive criticisms of Goethe. It was at this time, also, that he edited with Goethe the journal, "Die Horen." They published together their "Xenien" in 1797, and in this work they completely silenced the heavy artillery of all their critics. Within the two or three years following,

Schiller produced "The Song of the Bell," "The Crane of Ibycus," and several other famous poems of rare beauty.

In 1799 Schiller completed the great trilogy of "Wallenstein," the best acting play and the greatest purely tragic work ever written in the German language. Goethe said: "The work is so great that there exists no equal to it." It was certainly the greatest drama written in the eighteenth century, and among modern dramatic authors it has made Schiller's position secure in the rank of Goethe and Shakespeare.

In 1800 his "Mary Stuart" appeared. So great was his reputation abroad, following the publication of this play, that a London theatre sought to contract with him for the first production of all his future dramas. The "Maid of Orleans" was produced in 1801, followed by the "Bride of Messina," a Greek tragedy in the manner of Aeschylus and Sophocles. In 1802 he received a patent of nobility from the Emperor Francis II., which he accepted "for the sake of wife and children." He was now one of the great world-characters. Madame de Stael paid him a visit in 1803. He complained of her attentions as "suffocating," and when she had gone he wrote to Goethe that he felt as if he had just recovered from a severe illness.

Schiller was invited to Berlin in 1804, and was received with all but royal magnificence. His tragedies were enacted at the theatres, and he was lionized by both the people and the court. This triumphal visit to Berlin was much like Voltaire's final return to Paris. But Schiller could not be prevailed upon to remain at the Prussian court. He preferred the intellectual capital at Weimar to any political capital whatsoever, and wisely valued the society of Goethe above that of courts and kings.

His last work was the drama of "William Tell." The theme had been suggested to him by Goethe. It was a parting blow at autocracy. His health continued to fail because of his excessive labors, and he died a martyr to his art, on May 9, 1805, at the age of forty-five, at the height of his fame and in the prime of his intellectual powers.

It was in "William Tell" that Schiller wrote (IV., 1.): "The

storm is master. Man, as a ball, is tossed twixt winds and billows." From earliest childhood Schiller was attracted by the grander and more terrible phenomena of nature. He loved to see the forked lightnings leap and play, and hear the crashing thunders roll, while the roaring wind was music to his soul. This characteristic remained with him through life, and the stormy elements attended him, as a kindred soul, in death. He was buried shortly after midnight. The night was dark and threatening. Storm-clouds filled the sky. When the bier was placed beside the open grave, for a moment all was calm. The moon shone brightly on the coffin. The body was lowered to its last resting-place. Again the sky was overcast, the tempest burst, the winds howled, and the storm-king sang a mighty requiem above the poet's tomb. So passed the spirit of the immortal Schiller, the soul of German tragedy. His last conscious act was to kiss his faithful wife, to whom he had been supremely devoted, and his last words were "Happier—ever happier!" So died he who said:

Der Mensch ist frei geschaffen, ist frei  
Und wurd' er in Ketten geboren—

"Man is created free, and is free, even though born in chains."

### III.

#### LESSING.

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, "the father of German criticism," and, in point of time, the first among German classical writers, was born at Kamenz, in Saxony, the son of a pastor of that city, by whom he, too, was intended for the ministry. At the age of seventeen he began attending the university at Leipsic, and was a precocious student. He soon tired of theological studies, and took up the study of medicine, telling his father that he "could be a preacher any day." For the present, however, he desired a wider range of study. From Leipsic he went to the university at Wittenberg. At both universities he displayed marked aptitude for literature.

Lessing published a little volume of poems in 1748, after the manner of Anacreon. The next year he proceeded to Berlin. There he met Voltaire, who soon became his enemy. In 1755 he published his tragedy "Miss Sara Simpson," a drama based upon the family life, and tending to exalt the middle and lower classes. It was at once successful. But it was not until four years later that he really began his literary career.

In 1759, the year in which Schiller was born, Lessing commenced publishing his "Literary Letters," a task which occupied a great part of his time for the next seven years. The "Literary Letters" mark the beginning of the classical period of German literature. He left Berlin for a time, to become secretary to the Governor of Silesia. While at Breslau he published the drama "Mina von Barnhelm," one of the purest gems of German literature, and still regarded as a masterpiece. In 1766, after his return to Berlin, he began publishing his great treatise on aesthetic criticism, the "Laocoon," only one-third of which was ever completed. While engaged on this work poverty compelled him to sell his library. He then went to Hamburg, where he was em-



ployed to aid in the establishment of a national theatre. He now began publishing his "Dramatic Notes," which were in some measure a continuation of the "Laocoon." These essays are marvels of literary taste and mental astuteness, and have won encomiums from the masters of literary and dramatic criticism in all nations.

In 1770 Lessing was made librarian at Wolfenbützel, a position which he held until his death, eleven years later. Here he wrote the play, "Emile Galotti," the presentation of which was forbidden by the censor because of its political tendencies. At this time, also, he wrote "Nathan the Wise," which has been characterized as "a dramatic poem of toleration," and which is still regarded as one of the most beautiful specimens of German composition. It is said that the piece was inspired by his friendship for Moses Mendelssohn, the Jewish philosopher and scholar, and grand father of the great musician. Moses Mendelssohn and Lessing were born in the same year.

Lessing visited Vienna in 1775, and was given such an ovation as was never before received by a German author. He then visited Italy, and found that his fame had preceded him there also. In 1781 he died, at the age of fifty-two. The last three years of his life were devoted to controversial writings which profoundly affected the literary and political thought of the day. He was a fearless advocate of the freedom of opinion, and declared it "better that error should be taught than freedom of thought stifled." Lessing was almost alone in his advocacy of free speech at the time, and he did for his generation what Milton had done for England.

It is impossible to overestimate the value of Lessing's work in literary criticism. Unquestionably, he is Germany's foremost literary critic. Macaulay said that sixty years before his time Lessing was "beyond dispute, the first critic of Europe." His critical essays prepared the way for Goethe and Schiller, while his philosophical writings, beyond all doubt, were of substantial aid in preparing the path for Kant and Fichte. Speaking of the "Laocoon," Goethe said: "That long misunderstood phrase, ut

pictura poesis, was set aside. The distinction between the speaking and the plastic arts was clear. All the results of this glorious thought were revealed to us as by a lightning flash."

With all his polemical wit and daring, with all his remorseless logic and his cutting satire, Lessing is always broad, noble, tolerant, humane. There was nothing mean, low or narrow in his nature. No one can read his "Nathan the Wise" without being supremely impressed with a sense of the author's goodness, and the genuineness of his brave yet gentle heart. That play, indeed, is the sum of all his moral and philosophic teaching. When he makes his character say, in Act I., "For God rewards good deeds done here below—rewards them here",—he means just that, although he does not necessarily mean that the reward shall be paid in gold coin, or that it shall be paid immediately upon performance of the deed. When he says, in Act II., "Know this, that every country can produce good men," he means that, too, for he had said almost the same thing ten years before, when he wrote, in his essay on "Aristotle and Tragedy": "I am convinced that no nation in the world has been specially endowed with any mental gift superior to that of other nations." Such thoughts show the magnanimous world-spirit of the man.

Lessing's essays are models of a perfect expository style—clear, simple, logical, vigorous, concise and bold. His sentences are a net-work of close reasoning, compactly woven, and beautiful as a tapestry. His vehemence is not in his rhetoric, but in his thought; and in this respect his controversial writings often remind one of passages in Demosthenes. He is Greek in his manner, his thought and his ideals, and evidently no one ever read to better purpose the great Greek authors.

#### IV. KANT.

That vast intelligence known to the world as Immanuel Kant, "one of the greatest and most influential metaphysicians of all time," was born at Koenigsberg, Prussia, in 1724, and died there in 1804. He was never married. He never travelled. His eighty years were devoted to the peaceful pursuits of learning, and he never stirred from the precincts of the University of Koenigsberg, where he studied, wrote and taught. The adulation of the multitude and the flattery of the great were alike matters of indifference to him, and unlike other men of letters, he refused to visit other parts of the world. But he brought the world to his door. Madame de Stael said that, outside of Greek history, the world afforded no other example of such exclusive and supreme devotion to philosophical pursuits.

"He lived to a great age," says George Henry Lewes, in his *Biographical History of Philosophy*, "and never once quitted the snows of murky Koenigsberg. There he pursued a calm and happy existence, meditating, professing and writing. He had mastered all the sciences; he had studied languages, and cultivated literature. He lived and died a type of the German professor: he rose, smoked, drank his coffee, wrote, lectured, took his daily walks always at the same hour. The cathedral clock, it was said, was not more punctual in its movements than Immanuel Kant." Herder, who attended some of his lectures, said that they were distinguished for wit and humor as well as moral purity and profound thought.

At various times Kant lectured on logic, metaphysics, physics, politics, mathematics, anthropology, theology, pedagogy, and mineralogy. He was first offered the chair of poetry in the university, but declined it because he did not regard himself as particularly qualified for the work. In 1770 he was appointed to the

chair of logic and metaphysics, which he retained during the remaining thirty-four years of his life. He wrote works on astronomy, physical geography, neural pathology, psychology, aesthetics, ethnography, anthropology, history, criticism, meteorology, politics, logic, pedagogy and metaphysics. While his greatest achievements were in philosophy, his service to the physical sciences was hardly less valuable. It was Kant who first announced the theory that the solar system was developed from a primitive gaseous material with rotary motion, thus anticipating by thirty-five years the nebular hypothesis of Laplace.

But Kant, like Plato, was greatest in his metaphysics. In this field he was supreme in his generation. The chief of his philosophical works is his "Critique of Pure Reason," the most monumental work in metaphysics since Locke promulgated his *Essay on the Human Understanding*. "Our suggestion," he says, "is similar to that of Copernicus in astronomy, who finding it impossible to explain the movements of heavenly bodies on the supposition that they turned round the spectator, tried whether he might not succeed better by supposing the spectator to revolve and the stars to remain at rest." This suggests Einstein's recent theory of relativity. Kant wrote this great work in a few months, but he had previously meditated upon it for a period of twelve years and did not begin the work of composition until his ideas were thoroughly fixed.

It is evident that Kant was profoundly influenced by Hume, and that he sought by his massive structure to erect a bulwark against the skepticism of the English philosopher. Kant was not a skeptic; at least, he was not intentionally and avowedly so. But, for all that, the effect of his philosophy was to augment rather than to destroy skepticism. While he affirms the certitude of knowledge, he affirms, also, that knowledge is only relative. It is not strange, therefore, that philosophers claim to find in his system a scientific basis for skepticism. But Kant nobly vindicated the idea of duty. He founded upon the veracity of consciousness a system of morals, the belief in a future state and in the existence of God.

He was, as Robert Adamson said, in his essay on Kant, "The greatest philosopher of the eighteenth century." There will be no dissent from the statement of Thomas Carlyle that "His critical philosophy has been regarded as distinctly the greatest intellectual achievement of the century." Schlegel said: "In respect of its probable influence on the moral culture of Europe, it stands on a line with the Reformation." But his morals, it is believed, are better than his philosophy, and it is to be regretted if he has given skepticism a weapon with which to thwart so much that is beautiful, good and true.

Personally, Kant was a man of great kindness and austere morality. He was also a lover and advocate of political freedom. He expressed sympathy for the American Colonists in their fight for independence, and he also sympathized with the first Revolutionists of France. He was generous, honorable and true. "Benevolence," said he, "is a duty. He who frequently practices it, and sees his benevolent intentions realized, at length comes to love him to whom he has done good. When, therefore, it is said, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,' it is not meant that thou shalt love him first, and do good to him in consequence of that love, but, thou shalt do good to thy neighbor, and this thy beneficence will engender in thee that love to mankind which is the fullness and consummation of the inclination to do good."

In the same spirit, he adds: "Whether mankind be found worthy of love or not, a practical principle of good will is a duty mutually owed by all men to one another."

"Act always," he advises, "so that the immediate motive of thy will may become a universal rule for all intelligent beings."

Again he says: "There can be no more fundamental and more certain mode of pleasing the invisible power which governs the world, at least in order to be happy in another world, than virtuous conduct."

These are truths that matter; thoughts that count; grains of pure gold, without which all philosophy is but dross. They are the bed-rock of the life spiritual, the corner-stone in the adamant temple of the soul. They need no Critique of Reason to in-

fuse into them the breath of life, for they are of the very essence of the life that never dies. The cold embellishments of syllogistic logic can neither help nor hinder here, where the grandest ratiocinations of the human intellect have reached their highest point.

In De Quincey's "Last Days of Immanuel Kant," we find the great philosopher facing the end, with the serenity of an untroubled mind. "I do not fear death," said he, "for I know how to die. I assure you that if I knew this night was to be my last, I would raise my hands and say, 'God be praised!' The case would be far different if I had ever caused the misery of any of His creatures."

"Kant is the great renovator of philosophy," says Albert Schweigler, in his "History of Philosophy;" "he reduced once more to unity and totality the one-sided efforts of those who had preceded him. He stands in some special relation, either antagonistic or harmonious, to all others—to Locke no less than to Hume, to the Scottish philosophers no less than to the earlier English and French moralists, to the philosophy of Leibnitz and Wolff, as well as to the materialism of the French and the utilitarianism of the German clearing up period."

## V.

### RICHTER.

Jean Paul Richter was a sentimental prose writer, humorist and novelist, whose works are edited in thirty-four volumes. He does not belong to the German classical school, and was rather frowned upon by Goethe and Schiller, although Goethe praised his pedagogical work, "Levana," for "the boldest virtues, without the least excess."

Richter was born at the village of Wunseidel, in the Franconian mountains, in 1763. His early life was a bitter struggle with poverty in its hardest forms. In 1781 he went to Leipsic to study theology. But within three years he was obliged to flee to avoid the importunities of his creditors. Meanwhile he had published the satire, "Greenland Lawsuits," which was little appreciated on account of its extravagant eccentricity of style. In 1789 he wrote "The Devil's Papers," but could not find a publisher. His novels, "The Invisible Lodge" and "Hesperus" were published, respectively, in 1793 and 1794. In 1796 he visited Weimar, and was hospitably received by Herder, the constant friend of every aspiring genius, whom he warmly eulogized in his "Aesthetics," published in 1804. Although he was not warmly beamed upon by its greater luminaries, Richter's visit to Weimar was rather successful, and from that time forth his fortunes took a turn for the better. After a few more years of wandering, he settled permanently at Bayreuth, and remained there the remaining twenty-one years of his life, dying in 1825.

Carlyle first introduced Richter to English readers, by mention in his essays, and by his translation of "Quintus Fixlein," in 1827. DeQuincey published a "Life of Richter" in 1845, and selections from his writings were published by Lady Chatterton in 1859. Richter is, indeed, best read in excerpts, rather than in any of his completed works. Carlyle said of him: "There is probably

not in any modern language so intricate a writer; abounding, without measure, in obscure allusions, in the most twisted phraseology; perplexed into endless entanglements and dislocations, parenthesis within parenthesis; not forgetting elisions, sudden whirls, quips, conceits, and all manner of inexplicable crochets; the whole moving on in the gayest manner." But he had a deep and tender sympathy, a rich imagination and a certain delicacy of touch, which, with his other human qualities, have made his place secure within the circle of his admirers, by whom he is called "Der Einzige"—"The Unique."

Richter, we repeat, is best read in fine passages. Few of his works hold the interest, but many of them contain paragraphs of the rarest beauty, embellished to the highest degree of ornament, sublimely poetic, and deeply philosophic, or abounding in the practical wisdom of everyday life. Thus: "A man takes contradiction and advice much more easily than people think, only he will not bear it when violently given, even though it be well founded. Hearts are flowers; they remain open to the softly falling dew, but shut up in the violent down-pour of rain." Was there ever a more beautiful and effective simile than that presented in the last sentence? And here is another: "A Christian man can look down like an eternal sun upon the autumn of his existence; the more sand has passed through the hour-glass of life, the more clearly can he see through the empty glass. Earth, too, is to him a beloved spot, a beautiful meadow, the scene of his childhood's sports, and he hangs on this mother of our first life with the love with which a bride, full of childhood's recollections, clings to a beloved mother's breast, the evening before the day on which she resigns herself to the bridegroom's heart."

Now let us read what he says of authorship: "Never write on a subject without first having read yourself full on it; and never read on a subject till you have thought yourself hungry on it." Horace said nothing better than that, in the "Ars Poetica." And nothing, we believe, in either the Christian or the Pagan moralists, is better put than this:

"Nothing is more moving to man than the spectacle of reconciliation; our weaknesses are thus indemnified, and are not too



costly, being the price we pay for the hour of forgiveness; and the archangel, who has never felt anger, has reason to envy the man who subdues it. When thou forgivest, the man who has pierced thy heart stands to thee in the relation of the sea-worm that perforates the shell of the mussel, which straightway closes the wound with a pearl."

Behold, now his pretty picture of Hope: "Hope is the ruddy morning of joy, recollection is its golden tinge; but the latter is 'wont to sink amid the dews and dusky shades of twilight; and the bright blue day which the former promises, breaks, indeed, but in another world, and with another sun."

The following stern call to the duty of the hour, reads like one of the oracular utterances of Carlyle: "Be every minute, man, a full life to thee! Despise anxiety and wishing, the future and the past! If the second-pointer can be no road-pointer, with an Eden for thy goal, the month-pointer will be still less so,—for thou livest not from month to month, but from second to second! Enjoy thy existence more than thy manner of existence, and let the dearest object of thy consciousness be this consciousness itself! Make not the present a means of thy future; for this future is nothing but a coming present; and the present which thou despisest was once a future which thou desiredst."

Richter, with all his shimmering metaphor and pictured fantasies, abounds in deep and sober thoughts, thoughts that rise and set like distant suns, moving in the orbit of eternity. Such a thought as this would be not unworthy of Plato: "A man can even here be with God, so long as he bears God within him. We should be able to see without sadness our most holy wishes fade like flowers, because the sun above us still forever beams, eternally makes new, and cares for all; and a man must not so much prepare for eternity, as plant eternity in himself: eternity, serene, pure, full of depth, full of light, and of all else."

## VI. KLOPSTOCK.

Friederich Gottlieb Klopstock (born 1724, died 1803) has been called "the German Milton." He studied theology at Jena and Leipsic. After leaving the university he followed, for some years, the occupation of private tutor.

The first three cantos of his "Messiah," a Christian epic, were published in 1748, at Langensalza. The poem was completed in 1752, at Copenhagen, where its author was a guest of the King of Denmark. The publication of the first three cantos had attracted the attention of Bodmer, the Swiss critic, then an eminent authority on German letters, who had noted the Miltonic character of Klopstock's work.

Klopstock's dramatic productions are of an inferior order; overwrought, overdrawn, and theatrically impossible. His fame rests almost solely upon his "Messiah," a poem which, although hardly equal as a whole to the "Paradise Lost," abounds in fervid religious sentiment and discloses a rich vocabulary, with much beautiful poetic imagery. His representation of the characters of the Disciples, from this poem, has been much admired for its delicate lacy of language and its sweetly pious thought. We quote from Roscoe's translation:

"Now the last sleep,  
Last of his earthly slumbers, gently sealed  
The Saviour's eyes. In heavenly peace it came,  
Descending from the sanctuary of God  
In the still softness of the evening air,  
The Savior slept, and Selia meanwhile  
To the assembly with these words approached.  
Say who are they, whose eyes, bedimmed with grief,

Silent ascend the mountain? Sorrow's hand  
Their face has touched, yet harmed not,—ever such  
The grief of nobler souls; haply some friend  
Wrapt in the silent arms of death they mourn,  
Their like in virtue. Then the Seraph thus:  
Those are the holy twelve, O Selia,  
Chosen by the Mediator.”

Selia, then, as the Disciples come into view, inquires concerning each of the “holy twelve,” and is answered in turn by the guardian angels of the various Disciples. The picture thus presented, as the saints move in solemn review, like a heavenly constellation, is sublimely impressive, and is as beautiful and striking as the divine groups of Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel. Nothing in Milton can be said to surpass it. The review closes with St. John, of whom it is said—

“\* \* \* no fairer spirit  
On mortal man by the Creator's breath  
Was e'er bestowed, than the unspotted soul  
Of this disciple.”

And then the scene is finished with a group of angels hovering aloft—

“\* \* \* and with silent tenderness  
The seraphs o'er the loved disciple stood.  
So stand three brothers o'er a sister fair,  
In fondness gazing: on soft bedded flowers  
She sleeps in angel beauty, ignorant  
Of her blest father's hour of death; while they,  
Won by her silent loveliness, delay  
To break her golden slumbers.”

Klopstock's “Messiah” was one of the books which exerted a most powerful influence upon the youthful imagination of

Goethe. In this connection a delightful anecdote is related by Prof. Boyesen in his biography of Goethe. Goethe's father was a staid, stern and practical German lawyer, who could not endure the fervid rhapsodies of Klopstock, and he would not permit a copy of the "Messiah" to remain in his home. But his wife, who was of a deeply sentimental nature, secretly procured a copy. Young Goethe and his little sister Cornelia, sharing their mother's ardent temperament, devoured the book most ravenously. They memorized practically the whole of it, and were accustomed to amuse themselves by impersonating Satan and his fiends. "Standing on chairs in the nursery," says Prof. Boyesen, "they would hurl the most delightfully polysyllabic maledictions at each other. One Saturday evening, while their father was receiving a professional visit from his barber, the two children (who were always hushed and subdued in his presence) were seated behind the stove, whispering sonorous curses in each other's ears. Cornelia, however, carried away by the impetus of her inspiration, forgot her father's presence, and spoke with increasing violence: "Help me! help! I implore thee, and if thou demandst it Worship thee, outcast! Thou monster and black malefactor! Help me! I suffer the torments of death, the eternal avenger!" etc. The poor barber, frightened out of his wits by such extraordinary language, poured the soap-lather over the counsellor's bosom. The culprits were summoned for trial, and Klopstock was placed on the index expurgatorius."

But such a book is not to be wholly cast away. If it possessed no other merit, it would deserve to be embalmed in the affections of posterity for having helped to fire the imagination and fashion the giant soul of Goethe. It was Klopstock who first showed forth the marvelous richness and fluency of the German language. He was, in a manner, the John-the-Baptist of the Golden Age of German literature. His "Messiah" was published before Schiller was born, and when Goethe was an infant of two years, and he was spared to be a witness of their triumphs, and of those literary glories which at first he saw "as through a glass, darkly," but with which he was afterward brought face to face.

This more practical and material age has all but placed the

“Messiah” where Goethe’s father placed it—on the index of things forbidden, or at least neglected. Nor is Klopstock’s the only Messiah so cast out. But, in the endless process of the suns, younger Goethes will arise to track the aspirations of the heart or point the summits of the soul, and the Vision will not be lost to man.

## VII.

### WIELAND.

One of the most illustrious authors of the German classical period was Christopher Martin Wieland, whose works are edited by Gruber in fifty-three volumes. Wieland was born at Oberholzheim, Wurtemberg, in 1733. Like Lessing, he was the son of a preacher. Born with an innate aptitude for versification, some of his earliest productions attracted the attention of Bodmer, the Swiss critic, by whom he was invited to Zurich. There he remained for eight years, earning his living as a private tutor.

In 1769 Wieland was appointed professor of literature and philosophy at the University of Erfurt. Three years later he was summoned to Weimar, to become the tutor to the two sons of Princess Amalie of Saxe-Weimar, Prince Karl August and his brother. Endowed by nature with a talent for versification, he had, from the days of his youth, devoted all his spare moments to literature. In 1764, at the age of thirty-one, he had published his satire on idealism, "Don Silvio von Rosalva," a prose work, followed by his "Comic Tales," in 1766. In 1767 his "Agatha" appeared, presenting some studies in Fielding and other English prose writers. His poetic tale, "Musarion," appeared in 1768. Then came his "Nadine," also in verse, in 1769. In 1772, the year in which he proceeded to Weimar, he published his "Der goldene spiegel," wherein he attempts to depict the ideal social state.

Wieland was thirty-nine years of age when he reached Weimar, in whose constellation of immortals he was to become an unfading star. He soon abandoned all other pursuits, and gave the remainder of his life wholly to the tasks of literature. He now established "The Germany Mercury," a monthly journal of literature, which he continued to edit for thirty-seven years. This publication proved more profitable, from the financial viewpoint, than the journals edited by Goethe, Schiller, and other

great Germans of the period. The whole of his journalistic work is pervaded by a sort of mild Epicurean philosophy, somewhat Addisonian in style, and tending to diffuse a gentle and kindly glow of cultural elegance over the life and letters of the time.

The political genius of Wieland, like that of other intellectual giants of Weimar, was cosmopolitan in character. In furtherance of these views he published his satirical novel, "Die Abdereiten," in 1774. His romantic epic, "Oberon," published in 1780, is now regarded as the best of his productions. Before going to Weimar, Wieland had translated twenty-two of Shakespeare's plays. In the latter part of his life he did much toward the revival of the Greek and Roman classics. He translated the Satires and Epistles of Horace, the Letters of Cicero, and some of the works of Euripides, Xenophon and Aristophanes. His literary style was urbane, elegant, polished, and distinguished rather more for fluency than force. He was not, like Lessing, a precisian. He was more rhetorical than Lessing, but less ornate than Richter. He wrote to please, rather than to convince, and in pleasing he was able to persuade. "If Lessing gave precision to modern German prose," says one, "Wieland gave it elegance and fluency. His work, at once graceful and fanciful, is pervaded by a quaint humor and delicate irony that give it a lasting charm." Although his translation is inferior to the later one of Schlegel, it was Wieland who first introduced Shakespeare to the German mind. A characteristic specimen of Wieland's prose style is the following from his essay on "Philosophy as the Art of Life:"

"By far the greater part of the children of men never dreamed that there was such an art. People lived without knowing how they did it, very much as Mons. Jourdain, in Moliere's 'Citizen Gentleman,' had talked prose all his life, or as we all draw breath, digest, perform various motions, grow and thrive, without one in a thousand knowing or desiring to know by what mechanical laws or by what combination of causes all these things are done. And in this thick fog of ignorance innumerable nations in Asia, Africa, America, and the islands of the South Sea, white and olive, yellow-black and pitch-black, bearded and unbearded, circumcised and uncircumcised, tattooed and untattooed, with and

without rings through the nose, from the giants in Patagonia to the dwarf on Hudson's Bay, etc., etc., live to this hour. And not only so, but even of the greatest portion of the inhabitants of our enlightened Europe, it may be maintained with truth, that they know as little about the said art of life and that they care as little about it as the careless people of Otaheite or the half-frozen inhabitants of Terra del Fuego, who are scarcely more than sea-calves."

Here we have a style of writing which will be at once recognized by students of English literature as the style made famous by Mr. Addison; little or nothing of the sublime, devoid of all passionate vehemence, and not distinctly sparkling; but in the highest degree entertaining, and productive of the gentler and more placid emotions, like those produced by the contemplation of beautiful objects. We find examples of the same style in Fénélon's "Telemachus," and it abounds amid the beauties and graces of Virgil, Cicero and Horace.

Such is Wieland. With his discursive pleasantries, his ironic dignity, his Epicurean, suave and soothing self-sufficiency, his flashes of scholarship which remind us occasionally of Montaigne, his mild and amiable preachments, he led his generation a long stride on the way to a brighter view of life, and passed away in 1813, after a career devoted to the advancement of learning, the upbuilding of literary art and the glory of German letters.



## VIII.

### HERDER.

"Herder paid us a visit, and together with his great learning, he brought with him many other aids, and the later publications besides. Among these he announced to us the 'Vicar of Wakefield,' an excellent work, with the German translation of which he wished to make us acquainted by reading it aloud to us himself." So says Goethe, writing of his student life at Strasburg. It is a fitting introduction to the life and character of Johann Gottfried von Herder, the lover of good literature, the most pronounced bibliophile of the German classical age, and the personal friend of Goethe, Schiller, Lessing, Richter and Kant.

Herder was born at Mohrungen, in East Prussia, in 1744. He rose to greatness over obstacles which few men have been able to surmount. He was the son of a poor schoolmaster, and his early life was a hand-to-hand struggle with poverty; a contest in which he was handicapped by frail nerves and a weak physique. He studied at Koenigsburg under Kant, and would have taken the course in medicine, but his health would not permit. He was enabled to remain at the university only by accepting the charity of those who perceived his merit and generously aided him in his struggles. He finished in theology, and then began to earn a meager living by teaching. In 1764 he was called to the Cathedral School at Riga. Health and sight failed him, and he went to recuperate in France, returning to Germany in 1769. He visited Strasburg for optical treatment, and here he met Goethe, then a student, and five years his junior. The two soon became friends, and it was through Goethe's influence that Herder was invited, in 1775, to assume the post of Court Preacher to the Duke of Weimar; and thenceforth, for the remainder of his life, he was a conspicuous member of that distinguished group of poets and philosophers who inhabited the German Athens. Two years be-

fore his death he received a patent of nobility from the Elector of Bavaria. He died in 1803, at the age of fifty-nine, generally beloved and admired, and his literary comrades at Weimar erected to his memory a monument bearing the inscription, "Light, Love, Life."

These three words epitomize the ideals for which he lived and died. His works have been published in sixty volumes, of which the best known are his "Poetry of the Races," "The Spirit of Hebrew Poetry," "Ideas on the Philosophy of the Human Race," and a translation of "The Cid." In his "Poetry of the Races" he has taken the popular songs and ballads of nearly all the nations of Europe and rendered them into classical German with peculiar grace, fidelity and charm.

Herder is not at his best in his original poetic compositions. But in translating and interpreting the thoughts of others he had few equals and no superiors. In all his work in criticism, philosophy, philology and theology, he taught the unity of humankind and stressed the brotherhood of man. No man possessed a greater influence upon the minds of those with whom he came in contact, and his great literary associates were, in a manner, his pupils. His literary style, as well as his breadth of view, may be seen in the following, from his essay entitled "Tithon and Aurora:"

"The timid nature of man, always compassed about with hope and fear, often prophesies distant evils as near, and calls that death which is only a wholesome slumber, a necessary, health-bringing relaxation. And so it generally deceives itself in its predictions concerning lands and kingdoms. Powers lie dormant which we do not perceive. Faculties and circumstances are developing themselves, on which we could not calculate. But even when our judgment is true, it usually leans too much on one side. 'If this is to live,' we say, 'that must die.' We do not consider whether it may be possible that both may live and act favorably on each other. The good Bishop Berkley, who was no poet, was inspired by his beneficent zeal for America to write the following:

'Westward the star of empire takes its way;  
The four first acts already past,  
The fifth shall close the drama with the day,  
Time's noblest offspring is the last.'

So prophesied the good-natured bishop, and if his spirit could now glance at yonder up-striving America, he would perhaps discover, with the same glance, that, in the arms of the old Tithon, Europe, also, a new Aurora was slumbering. Not four, scarcely three acts in the great drama of this still youthful quarter of the globe, are past; and who shall say how many times yet the old Tithon of the human race may and will renew his youth upon our earth!"

A heartening and a comforting thought is this, written more than a century ago, for the needs of Europe in the day of her trial! Herder saw in death but the perpetual renewing of life; and he saw in life a growth which, though changing its forms, never ceases; a drama which changes scenes, but never ends.

Dr. Matthew Arnold, the greatest English critic since Macaulay, in his beautiful essay on "Sweetness and Light," had this to say of Herder and Lessing: "Generations will pass, and literary monuments will accumulate and works far more perfect than the works of Lessing and Herder will be produced in Germany; and yet the names of these two men will fill a German with a reverence and enthusiasm such as the names of the most gifted masters will hardly awaken. And why? Because they humanized knowledge; because they broadened the basis of life and intelligence; because they worked powerfully to diffuse sweetness and light, to make reason and the will of God prevail."

## IX.

### HEINE.

After Goethe, Heinrich Heine was, in the opinion of many competent judges, the most gifted lyrical artist of Germany. Born at Dusseldorf, in 1799, of Hebrew parents, young Heine was destined for commercial pursuits, but early in life he revolted and gave his heart to literature. He was graduated in the law, but made no effort to follow his profession.

Heine's first poems were published in 1822. Two years later he published another volume of verse, entitled "Book of Songs," which was rendered into English by Sir Walter Scott. In 1844 appeared "Neue Gedichte," containing some of his finest lyrics. Four books of his "Reisebilder," or "Travel-Pictures," appeared from 1826 to 1831, and gave to Heine, at once, his greatest fame and infamy. These sketches were pronounced "the most brilliant, the wittiest, the most entertaining, the most immoral, the coarsest, the most dangerous, the most revolutionary, the most atheistic books that any German author had ever printed." The work was forbidden in Germany and other monarchical countries because of its revolutionary doctrines.

In 1831 Heine took up his abode in Paris, where he died in 1856. A spinal malady confined him to his bed during the last eight years of his life, but during this period of suffering in what he termed his "mattress-grave" his mind remained undimmed and his literary activities were unabated.

Heine's songs are among the sweetest ever written in any tongue, and in the world's literature he will forever rank among the masters of the lyric art. One of the most widely known of his songs is "The Lorelei," which is unsurpassed among the folk-songs of any people. These verses will illustrate its bewitching sweetness:

I know not whence it rises  
    This thought so full of woe;  
But a tale of times departed  
    Haunts me, and will not go.

The air is cool, and it darkens,  
    And calmly flows the Rhine;  
The mountain-peaks are sparkling  
    In the sunny evening-shine.  
And yonder sits a maiden,  
    The fairest of the fair;  
With gold is her garment gleaming  
    As she combs her golden hair.

Although Heine was pre-eminently a poet, his prose style was remarkable for its incisive and flashing lucidity. A fine specimen is this, from the "Reisebilder," where he is comparing himself with Don Quixote:

"Perhaps, after all, you are right, and I am only a Don Quixote, and the reading of all sorts of wonderful books has turned my head, as it was with the Knight of La Mancha, and Jean Jacques Rousseau was my Amadis of Gaul, Mirabeau my Roland or Agramante; and I have studied too much the heroic deeds of the French Paladins and the round-table of the National Convention. Indeed, my madness and the fixed ideas that I created out of books are of a quite opposite kind to the madness and the fixed ideas of him of LaMancha. He wished to establish again the expiring days of chivalry; I, on the contrary, wish to annihilate all that is yet remaining from that time, and so we work with altogether different views. My colleague saw wind-mills as giants; I, on the contrary, can see in our present giants only vaunting wind-mills. He took leather wine-skins for mighty enchanters, but I can see in the enchanters of to-day only leather wine-skins. He held beggarly pot-houses for castles, donkey-drivers for cavaliers, stable-wenches for court-ladies; I, on the

contrary, hold our castles for beggarly pot-houses, our cavaliers for mere donkey-drivers, our court-ladies for ordinary stable-wenchens. As he took a puppet-show for a state ceremony, so I hold our state ceremonies as sorry puppet-shows, yet as bravely as the brave Knight of La Mancha I strike out at the clumsy machinery. Alas! such heroic deeds often turn out as badly for me as for him, and I must suffer much for the honor of my lady."

Such a writer is, indeed, fated to have a deal of trouble with established authority. Heine was not only democratic in his instincts; he was vindictively and pugnaciously so. He was not content at striking at his opponent—he must sneer at him; and blows are more readily forgiven than sneers. But he loved liberty, even though he sometimes confused the ideas of liberty and license. It was Heinrich Heine who said: "If all Europe were to become a prison, America would still present a loop-hole of escape; and God be praised! the loop-hole is larger than the dungeon itself." Matthew Arnold declared Heine to be "the most important German successor and continuator of Goethe in Goethe's most important line of activity,"—that of "a soldier in the war of liberation of humanity."

Heine thus speaks of his early pilgrimage to the shrine of Goethe: "When I visited him in Weimar, and stood before him, I involuntarily glanced at his side to see whether the eagle was not there with the lightning in his beak. I was nearly speaking Greek to him; but as I observed that he understood German, I stated to him in German that the plums on the road between Jena and Weimar were very good. I had for so many long winter nights thought over what lofty and profound things I would say to Goethe, if I ever saw him—and when I saw him at last, I said to him that the Saxon plums were very good! And Goethe smiled."

But Heine, with all his wit and merriment, was by no means devoid of spiritual thought. He was a man who loved and hated and suffered much, and he learned, with Browning, that "Knowledge by suffering entereth." From his mattress-grave he cried out: "Wherever a great soul gives utterance to its thoughts, there, also, is Golgotha!" He was a man of dual personality. He had his Bohemian side; but there was another side, which appears

in many of his songs, and in such anecdotes as this:

"While I was standing before the cathedral at Amiens," he says, "with a friend who with mingled fear and pity was regarding that monument—built with the strength of Titans and decorated with the patience of dwarfs—he turned to me at last and inquired, 'How does it happen that we do not erect such edifices in our day?' And my answer was, 'My dear Alphonse, the men of that day had convictions, while we moderns have only opinions; and something more than opinions is required to build a cathedral.'"

Heine was correctly appraised by Gautier in these words: "Never was a nature composed of more diverse elements than that of Heine. He was at once credulous, tender, and cruel, sentimental and mocking, refined and cynical, enthusiastic, yet cool-headed; everything except dull."

## X.

### WEBER.

The literary movement begun in England by Keats and Wordsworth early in the nineteenth century and transmitted by them to Tennyson, had its altar fires carried to Germany by Friederich Wilhelm Weber. As Walter Scott was made a poet by reading and translating German ballads, so did Weber gain his first poetical inspiration from English verse.

Weber was born Dec. 26, 1813, at Alhausen, Westphalia. Like La Fontaine, the French fabulist, he was the son of a forest-keeper. He first studied philology at Breslau, where he was a classmate of Gustav Freitag, the poet and dramatist. He then studied medicine, and thereafter travelled extensively in Germany, Italy and France. He practiced medicine in Driburg in 1856, and was attending physician at a sanitarium in Lippspringe. He was elected to the Reichstag, and resided for the remainder of his life at Nieheim, in Westphalia, where he died April 5, 1894.

Weber's genius flowered late in life. He was fifty-six years of age, and had then lived four years longer than Shakespeare, thirty years longer than Keats, twenty-six years longer than Shelly, nineteen years longer than Burns, and eleven years longer than Schiller had lived, before his soul burst forth in that divine efflorescence which thrilled, adorned and glorified the German Fatherland with its resplendent gift of song. In 1869 Weber gave to the world his translation of Tennyson's "Enoch Arden." Three years later he published his "Swedish Songs." In 1874 he returned to his first love, and published a translation of Tennyson's "Maude."

Not until 1876 did he, at the age of sixty-three, put forth his "Dreizehnlinden," the most popular poem ever produced in the German language; a poem which in its popularity with the Ger-



man masses has outrivalled even Scheffel's "Trompeter von Saeckingen." In 1906 the one hundredth edition of "Dreizehnlinden" was published by Rickelt, and the occasion was celebrated throughout Germany. Other editions have since been published.

Weber published three volumes of lyrics, "Flowers of Mary," "Our Father," and "Autumn Leaves."

In 1892, at the age of seventy-nine, he issued his "Goliath," an epic of the northern races; a poem which some critics have regarded as superior to the "Dreizehnlinden." His principal biographers are Schwering (1900) and Keiter (1903). Loewenburg, in his "Dichterabende," published in 1904, places him among the first German poets of modern times.

Aside from holding his seat in the Prussian legislature, Weber appears to have taken little or no interest in politics, and when not engaged in the active practice of his profession he led the calm, unostentatious life of a poet of nature, as quiet, peaceful and uneventful as that of Wordsworth at Grasmere and Rydal Mount. His simple, graceful and melodious numbers suggest the fascinating felicity of Keats, while his descriptions of nature transcend the beauties of Wordsworth. In canto five of the "Dreizehnlinden," for example, we catch the glow of evening, we hear the droning bee that has lost its way, we see the swallow circling home, while the Weser softly flows, and all nature sighs to rest in the full glory of a night in June. The poem is an epic song of the victorious fight of Christianity with Saxon paganism a thousand years ago. The life of the forest primeval is there; the dark, dank wilderness, the bog and fen, the tinkling springs, trickling among the mosses that yield to the tread of Saxon warriors marching to the thunders of their Thor, while the smoke of their altar fires is wreathed among the ancient boughs. Hard by is the monastery of the Thirteen Linden, whence the poem takes its name. In the fourth canto he depicts the monks, each one so life-like, so real, that his presence is both seen and felt. And, as in the great Christian epic of Tasso, there is the golden thread of romance interwoven throughout the tale—the love of Elmar, the heroic Lord of Goshawk Manor, for Hildegarde. In

this, as in all of Weber's works, there is the powerful and ever-present Christian motif, rising like the tide and bearing down all before it. In him we find none of the mild pantheism of Wordsworth; none of the sheer hedonism of Goethe. Throughout all his work there resounds the ringing note of the Christian faith, dominant and clear, virile and pure, surpassing in its tenderness, overwhelming in its power. In this sweet and prayerful spirit does he close his greatest poem:

“Helf uns Gott den weg zur Heimat  
Aus dem Erdenland zu finden;  
Betet fur den armen Schreiber  
Schliest den Sang von Dreizehnlinden.”

That so remarkable a poem has thus far escaped translation into English, and is almost wholly unknown to English readers, is to be attributed only to an oversight on the part of those who are capable of performing a work of such value to modern culture. At the author's request, Rev. John Rothensteiner of St. Louis, Missouri, a gifted author of religious songs, has rendered into English the following verses from Weber's "Herbst-Blaetter"—Autumn Leaves—which afford an excellent example of Weber's soulful piety and the placid sweetness of his lyric style:

### Was Life a Dream?

Past eighty winters, here my journey ends;  
Rest, pilgrim-staff, and let us vigil keep  
For Charon's boat across the mystic deep  
Whilst dreamlike o'er the past my spirit bends,  
Recalling life's long pain and brief delight  
Like yonder sunset-clouds all golden bright.

Was life a dream?—A dewy springtide morn,  
Mysterious gloom of wild-wood beech and oak,  
The forest-ranger's lodge, the quick, sharp stroke  
Of woodman's ax, the post-boy's far off horn,  
The finches' happy song, the stockdove's call,  
And church bells chiming with the water-fall.

Then bench and table in a whitewashed hall,  
A crowd of boys with faces rosy-bright,  
Poring o'er book and script; one man of might,  
Yet kind and mild, the guide and friend of all.  
Homer and Plato in the niches low,  
And laughing Horace and great Cicero.

A student corps with face-disfigurements,  
On each proud breast the vari-colored band;  
With wit and wisdom and with blade in hand  
Still rich in want and folly and good sense;  
Keeping in song and wine the golden mean,  
With thoughts as high as eagles and as keen.

A quaint old city in my native land,  
And endless battling then with drouth and death,  
To heal each pain, and ease the fevered breath,  
By grace of God, with skill and gentle hand.  
Long sleepless nights, and weary days and faint;  
Now grateful thanks, now much ungracious plaint.

And many a bracing ride through winter snows,  
And walks along the spring-tide's pageantry;  
But constant care and sorrow walked with me,  
And oft a prayer, a cry for help arose.  
But half my prayer was lost, and yet was made  
Complete by those that cared for me and prayed.

And many a night beneath the starry throng  
Returning from my day's work and the heat,  
Came rhyme on rhyme, as measured by the beat  
With which my palfrey's motion led my song.  
All gone, forgotten, what was born of night,  
Lost as it came in Time's eventful flight. '

But now meseems, I'm dreaming evermore;  
How long, how long!—A kingdom God made known  
Beyond the sea of time, with great white throne;  
Afar it seems to raise its glittering shore;  
The darksome boatman stands and beckons me—  
God grant my soul the blest eternity.

PART SEVEN

GREAT BRITISH AUTHORS

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I. SHAKESPEARE

II. SPENSER

III. MILTON

IV. ADDISON

V. POPE

VI. BYRON

VII. SCOTT

VIII. WORDSWORTH

IX. DICKENS

X. TENNYSON

The English language has a veritable power of expression such as, perhaps, never stood at the command of any other language of men. Its highly spiritual genius and wonderfully happy development and condition have been the result of a surprisingly intimate union of the two noblest languages in Modern Europe, the Teutonic and the Romaic. It is well known in what relation these two stand to one another in the English tongue; the former supplying, in far larger proportion, the material ground work; the latter, the spiritual conceptions. In truth a language, which by no mere accident has produced and upborne the greatest and most predominant poet of modern times, as distinguished from the ancient classical poetry (I can, of course, only mean Shakespeare), may, with all right, be called a world-language, and, like the English people, appears destined hereafter to prevail, with a sway more extensive even than its present, over all the portions of the globe. For in wealth, good sense, and closeness of structure, no other of the languages at this day spoken deserves to be compared with it,—not even our German, which is torn, even as we are torn, and must first rid itself of many defects before it can enter boldly into the lists as a competitor with the English.

—Jacob Grimm.

## SHAKESPEARE.

William Shakespeare was born at Stratford-on-Avon in 1564, and died there in 1616, at the age of fifty-two. The biographical data we possess concerning him are too meager, unsatisfactory and unimportant to cast a ray of light upon his character. We are compelled to judge him by his work. But such judgments are not always true. Shakespeare, like Lope de Vega, wrote to please the multitude rather than to instruct it. He was wholly of the stage. It was for him both home and workshop. All we certainly know of him lends force to the conviction that the theatre was the law of his love and life. His intellect was nurtured in this dramatic diathesis. One should be chary of seeking too much self-revelation in the plays of such an author. Books have been written about "Shakespeare as a Lawyer," etc., etc., from information vouchsafed in his plays. It seems that all such works are violative of the cardinal principles of literary criticism. Shakespeare was not writing lawbooks, nor works upon theology, medicine or logic. In passing judgment upon a literary work we must consider the author's intent. We have no right to consider a tragedy as a work on criminal jurisprudence. Shakespeare was primarily a playwright.

Because of the slender knowledge extant concerning his personality, the authorship and even the existence of Shakespeare have been questioned in recent years. Some have thought it impossible that an unlearned actor, such as Shakespeare certainly was, could have written the plays and poems ascribed to him. But a minute study of the Shakespearean works will quickly dispel the illusion that these works bear intrinsic evidence of scholarship. Others have thought that so great a man must have made a greater stir than did Shakespeare; that he should have been at least as well known as Sir Francis Bacon. The soundness of that

view is by no means apparent. Great men are not seldom ignored by those immediately surrounding them. Shakespeare's occupation was not respected in his day. Moreover, in actual scholarship, he was greatly inferior to Ben Johnson, Marlowe, and other dramatists of the time. He was a skilled adapter and compiler of the work of other men, which he often passed as his own, a faculty not likely to win the highest encomiums from his own associates.

As a writer of comedy Shakespeare will hardly be accepted as the superior of Moliere, whose mode of life much resembled that of the English bard; in fertility of invention he was vastly inferior to Lope de Vega, whom he resembles in temporal success; and in sheer depth and force of intellect, in breadth of scholarship and ripeness of culture, he is not to be compared with Goethe. As a writer of tragic poetry only, he lacked the pristine fire of the Greek masters and the classical correctness of the French. Where, then, is his superiority? His excellence is due almost wholly to his intuitive knowledge of the human emotions. Here his wisdom is truly prodigious, and he rises to almost supernatural stature. He was the most sensitive and the keenest of all observers. He was omniscient in his perceptivity, ubiquitous in his perspicacity, overmastering in the abysmal reach of his passion-voicing power. What he saw he felt, and what he felt his consummate artistry translated to the minds of men. He could truly say with his own Othello: "This is the only witchcraft I have used." He viewed, with an infinite sagacity, and with a single all-sweeping glance, the perimeter of human conduct. Seldom indeed has it been given to the eye of mortal man to see the inmost secrets of hearts as Shakespeare saw them; to read them as they were read by his all-seeing and unerring eye; or to voice the tumults of the soul as he has uttered them, linked with the eternal harmonies and rapt in the rythm of a deathless truth. Here, then, is the secret of his mastery, his mystery and his power. In the face of self-evident genius of the most exalted type, critics fain would search for scholarship. They would see Shakespeare's diploma! Not only would Bacon's scholarship have been without value in pro-



ducing the Shakespearean creations; it would have made them impossible. As Hudson says, in his introduction to *King Lear* (taking the thought from Dryden), "Had he been more addicted to looking at Nature through 'the spectacles of books', or through other men's eyes, he would probably have seen less of her inward meaning, and been less happy and less idiomatic in his translation of it." However pleasing to pedantic vanity may be the theory that the great dramatic poet was versed in the lore of books, the plays themselves afford conclusive evidence to the contrary. Had Shakespeare been learned in the historical and classical literature familiar to the cultured minds of his generation, he could not have displayed so much ignorance regarding the lives and times described in many of his plays.

Enough has been presented by modern scholarship to show that, in at least the most accessible of the fields of learning at that time (history and biography), Shakespeare cannot be reproached with scholarship. Who does not envy Scott's old cavalier knight in Woodstock, with his "Will Shakespeare says" forever on his tongue? We know that old Sir Henry had no commentaries in his edition; that the bard he knew was the old magician himself, Shakespeare unannotated and unadorned, magnificent in his mystery, adorable in his beauty, inexplicable and unexplained. But, so patiently and passionately have his devotees pursued him, in their anxiety to trace those mystic veins of virgin gold to the mother-lode, that they have but too well succeeded.

Historical research has now fairly established the fact that not a single one of the plays, nor a single one of the great poems attributed to him, is in plot, thought and verbiage wholly original with him. No finished work that bears his glorious name is original in its entirety. In some instances he has paraphrased, and in other places he has deliberately taken the words of other writers, placed them in the mouths of his own characters, and thus used them as his own. But his characters, once he has touched them, become peculiarly and distinctly his own. The whole history of art discloses no creation bearing more clearly the mark and stamp of exclusive individuality. The play may

be a time-worn theme or another's plot, but the characters are Shakespeare's very own. In his essay on Quotations and Originality, Emerson observes: "When Shakespeare is charged with debts to authors, Landor replies, 'yet he was more original than his originals. He breathed upon dead bodies and brought them into life.'" So he did. Shylock and Hamlet were well-known characters in the older drama before Shakespeare heard of them. But not until he touched them with the wand of his mystic power did they become instinct with life.

Among all the women of the stage, where shall we find such another group of feminine intellects as Portia, Isabella, Beatrice and Rosalind? Or such beautiful creatures of passion as Juliet, Helena, Perdita, Viola, Ophelia and Miranda? Where such characters of the affections as Hermione, Desdemona, Imogen and Cordella? One may almost hear the rustle of their garments as they pass.

Sir John Falstaff, of protuberant abdomen, swaggering, ungracious gait and braggart speech, drinking and swearing and lying, hearty and jolly withal, grunting with comfort and reeking with ale, still treads the boards alone and greets us with his loud guffaw. And there are Slender and Justice Shallow, and the inimitable Dogberry, as Ulrici called him "the clown par excellence," who insisted upon being written down an ass—in officialdom the climax of absurdity, but none the less true to type as the ebullience of legalism and the efflorescence of village politics. Who can forget Jaques, "the melancholy Jacques," who could "suck melancholy out of a song as a weasel sucks eggs?" Or Touchstone, of whom Hudson said "he is the most entertaining of Shakespeare's privileged characters"? There, too, is the asinine Bottom, still rehearsing "most obscenely and courageously." The fairies "fan the moonbeams from his sleeping eyes," and he calls for "a bottle of hay." So do the airy spirits mingle with the clownishness of this world. Fairies! Queen Mab, "no bigger than an agate-stone on the forefinger of an alderman"; Puck, and Ariel, Titania and her dewy train! Were there ever such fairies as we find in Shakespeare? Of all the dramatists, he alone seems to possess the gift of the occult, the mastery of the supernatural.

Of the historic and tragic characters we need say nothing now. The reader who has not wept with Othello, shuddered at Macbeth or been moved by the tragic spirit of Hamlet, is impervious to human feeling and devoid of human passion. Indeed, we may say with Macaulay: "The characters of which he has given us an impression as vivid as that which we receive from the characters of our own associates, are to be reckoned by the score." In this respect he leaves all other dramatists far behind. "Compare him with Homer, the tragedians of Greece, the poets of Italy, Plautus, Cervantes, Moliere, Addison, Le Sage, Fielding, Richardson, Scott, the romancers of the elder or later schools," says Henry Hallam—"one man has far more than surpassed them all. Others may have been as sublime, others may have been more pathetic, others may have equalled him in grace and purity of language, and have shunned some of his faults; but the philosophy of Shakespeare, his intimate searching out of the human heart, whether in the gnomic form of sentence, or in the dramatic exhibition of character, is a gift peculiarly his own."

Coleridge, in his *Biographia Literaria*, calls him "Our myriad-minded Shakespeare." Thomas Carlyle, in his essay on "Characteristics of Shakespeare," says: "If I say that Shakespeare is the greatest of intellects, I have said all concerning him." But he was not the greatest of intellects. He was not the greatest of poets. But, as a painter of human character, his work has not been equalled in any nation or in any age. Shakespeare, as none before or since have done, could read the message of the soul and speak the language of the heart.

"Great he may be justly called," Professor Blair observed in his lecture on English tragedy, "as the extent and force of his natural genius, both for tragedy and comedy, are altogether unrivaled. But, at the same time, it is a genius shooting wild; deficient in just taste, and altogether unassisted by knowledge or art. Long has he been idolized by the British nation; much has been said, and much has been written concerning him; criticism has been drawn to the very dregs, in commentaries upon his words and witticisms; and yet it remains, to this day, in doubt, whether his beauties or his faults be greatest. \* \* \* \* All these

faults, however, Shakespeare redeems, by two of the greatest excellencies which any tragic poet can possess; his lively and diversified paintings of character; his strong and natural expressions of passion. These are his two chief virtues; on these his merit rests."

So vast, indeed, is the diversity of his portraiture of human passion that the human soul knows no attitude in which the great painter has not limned it forth in all its lights and shades, in all its beauty and its truth, and placed it in the endless gallery of his art, for the wonder and admiration of the ages. "Amid so many portraitures," as Taine has remarked, we must, perforce, "choose two or three to indicate the depth and nature of them all;" for "the critic is lost in Shakespeare as in an immense town; he will describe a couple of monuments, and entreat the reader to imagine the city."

## II.

### SPENSER.

Born in 1552, Edmund Spenser was nine years older than Bacon, and twelve years older than Shakespeare. He was a native of London, and took his master's degree at Cambridge in 1576. Three years later he published his "Shepherd's Calendar," which Dryden proclaimed to be without an equal in any language, further declaring that it placed Spenser in the class of Virgil and Theocritus. This pastoral, in twelve books, was the first really forceful and sustained effort in English poetry since the days of Chaucer, and was immediately recognized as the work of a master, although it betrays the diffuseness, prolixity, pedantic phraseology and tendency to grotesque exaggeration which too often mar Spenser's style, and it by no means justifies the extravagant encomium of Dryden. However, it won warm praise from Sir Philip Sidney and a meager patronage from the powerful and popular Earl of Leicester, one of the favorites of Queen Elizabeth.

At about this time the poet was appointed secretary to Lord Grey, but recently created Lord Deputy of Ireland. With his new chieftain he at once entered upon the turbulent duties of the British service in that unhappy island—a work which was to occupy the remainder of his life. Spenser and Sir Walter Raleigh were both with Lord Grey at the tragedy of Smerwick, where six hundred of the Irish, after having peacefully and voluntarily surrendered their arms, were cruelly massacred by order of the English general. Raleigh, it is said, was captain of one of the bands of executioners. It is not believed that the poet took any part in this or other armed engagements, but it is certain that he was at all times an eloquent defender of Lord Grey's merciless and remorseless regime.

With but occasional visits to England, Spenser remained in Ireland from the time of Desmond's rebellion in 1580 until the

outbreak of Tyrone's rebellion in 1599. Many of the events of those terrible years, when the English attempted to exterminate the entire population of Munster, are calmly reported by Spenser in his document entitled "View of the present State of Ireland." Spenser went to Ireland for no romantic purpose; but, as Dean Church in his biography observes: "He came to make his fortune as well as he could, and he accepted the conditions of place and scene, and entered at once into the game of adventure and gain which was the natural one for all English comers, and of which the prizes were lucrative offices and forfeited manors and abbeys. And in the native population and native interests, he saw nothing but what called forth not merely antipathy but deep moral condemnation. It was not merely that the Irish were ignorant, thriftless, filthy, debased and loathsome in their pitiable misery and despair; it was that in his view, justice, truth, honesty, had utterly perished among them, and therefore were not due to them. Of any other side of the picture he, like other good Englishmen, was entirely unconscious; he saw only on all sides of him the empire of barbarism and misrule which valiant and godly Englishmen were fighting to vanquish and destroy—fighting against apparent but not real odds. And all this was aggravated by the stiff adherence of the Irish to their old religion."

Such was the harsh and gloomy setting in which Spenser took up the work of writing that splendid allegory "The Faery Queen," a poem distinguished for its elevated religious tone, its dreamy enchantment, its softness of coloring, delicacy of fancy and the melodious beauty and harmony of its numbers. It is one of the longest poems in the English language. It is more than twice as long as Milton's great epic, or Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*. But few of the greater English poems display such a lavish profusion and richness of imagery, a musical cadence so exquisite, stately, and unfailing, or a versatility so fascinating and exhaustless. Little wonder that Spenser has been a favorite with so many of our greater poets. He was admired by Shakespeare. Hallam thinks him superior to Ariosto. Cowley says that he was made a poet by reading Spenser. Dryden says: "Milton has acknowledged to me that Spenser was his original."

Pope found the Faerie Queen an unfailing joy in both youth and age. Matthew Arnold said: "His verse is more fluid, slips more easily and quickly along, than the verse of almost any other English poet." Campbell calls him, because of the luxurious harmony of his colorings, the "Rubens of English poetry." No poet, indeed, has made a more profound impression upon the poets who have followed him. A pronounced defect of the piece, however, is the cringing, sycophantic and odious truckling to arbitrary power by means of an utterly shameless and nauseating flattery of the vain, capricious and ill-tempered Queen of England. As Gloriana, Elizabeth is made empress of all true nobility; as Belpheobe she is represented as the princess of all sweetness and beauty; as Britomart the armed votaress of all purity, and as Mercilla, the lady of all compassion and grace!

The reader may catch the langorous charm of his verse from the following excerpt, describing the dwelling of Morpheus:

And more to lull him in his slumber soft,  
A trickling stream from high rock tumbling down,  
An ever-drizzling rain upon the loft,  
Mix't with a murmuring wind much like the sowne  
Of swarming bees, did cast him in a swoon.  
No other noise, nor people's troublous cries,  
As still are wont t' annoy the walled town,  
Might there be heard; but careless Quiet lies  
Wrapt in eternal silence far from enemies.

In 1595, in celebration of his marriage, Spenser produced his *Epithalamion*, one of the greatest of English lyrics, and probably the finest composition of its kind in any language. But, in less than four years, the Irish stormed his castle of Kilcolman, and the poet and his young wife barely escaped with their lives, leaving their babe to perish in the flames. Spenser reached England in a state of despair, and died soon thereafter, having published but

half of the "Faery Queen." The remaining six books, if they were ever completed, perished with the poet's child in Kilcolman castle. Thus died the first of the great Elizabethan poets. Critics like Macaulay may complain of his tedium—a defect common to most allegorical tales—but none will deny that Spenser was the first to show forth the spacious beauties of English speech. He is buried in Westminster Abbey, near the tomb of Chaucer.

His limpid, liquid note is thus intoned by Keats:

"A silver trumpet Spenser blows,

And, as its martial notes to silence flee,

From a virgin chorus flows

A hymn in praise of spotless Chastity.

'Tis still! Wild warblings from th' Eolian lyre

Enchantment softly breathe, and tremblingly expire."



### III.

#### MILTON.

His soul was like a star and dwelt apart.

—Wordsworth.

John Milton, the most learned man that ever dipped pen in the ethereal fountains of English verse, was born Dec. 9, 1608, eight years before the death of Shakespeare. He was a native of London, received his early education at St. Paul's school, near his home, and at sixteen entered Christ's College at Cambridge, where, during a seven years' course, he took both his bachelor's and master's degrees. Meanwhile, his father, a scrivener, had acquired a competence and retired to a country seat at Horton, whither his gifted son followed.

At Horton, Milton pursued an elaborate course of self-culture, whereby he designed to perfect himself in the literature of Greece and Rome, as well as in the modern languages. He acquired a complete mastery not only of Greek and Latin, but of Hebrew, Syriac, Italian, French, Dutch and other European languages. During his six years at Horton he composed *L'Allegro*, *Il Penseroso*, *Comus* and *Lycidas*, and emerged from his retirement as one of the first lyric poets of the age. Indeed, his *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* have never been surpassed in English verse.

He now departed for Italy, where he was to spend fifteen months. At Paris he met the great Dutch writer, Hugo Grotius. He interviewed Galileo at Florence. At Naples he visited the Marquis of Villa, then in his old age, who had in his youth befriended Tasso. At every point he visited the great libraries, met the literati, and studied assiduously to perfect himself in literature. To distinguish himself as the author of a great poem had been the dream of his life, and it was an ideal which, throughout his busy and varied career, he never for one moment relinquished.

In 1639 he returned to England, and opened a school for boys in London.

At the age of thirty-five he contracted a marriage which proved unhappy. Four years after the death of his first wife he married again. His second wife died in fifteen months. In 1663 he contracted a third marriage. He was, in modern times, the first great advocate of divorce, and his utterances upon woman-kind in general do not mark him as one who would, in any circumstances, find the domestic relation particularly happy.

In 1649 he was made Latin secretary to Cromwell. Overwork in this office was the immediate cause of his blindness. At the age of forty-three his eye-sight was wholly gone. However, he continued in his office until 1658. With the Restoration in 1660 Milton, blind and poor, became a fugitive, but he was afterwards included in the general amnesty. Now, at the age of fifty-two, he seriously set to work upon the poem which had been the ambition of his life, and which he had meditated upon various occasions for a quarter of a century. During the preceding twenty years he had published some twenty-five tracts, and had achieved fame as a master of polemical warfare, although much of his prose is mere epideictic display. But in all these wordy digladiations is the battle-trump of an orotund style, resonant, strong and clear, bearing down all obstacles in the roll and sweep of its majestic power. "It is to be regretted," says Macaulay, "that the prose writings of Milton should, in our time, be so little read. As compositions they deserve the attention of every man who wishes to become acquainted with the full power of the English language. They abound with passages compared with which the finest declamations of Burke sink into insignificance. They are a perfect Field of Cloth of Gold. The style is stiff with gorgeous embroidery. . . . It is to borrow his own majestic language, 'a seven-fold chorus of hallelujahs and harping symphonies'." Mark Patison, too, in his biography of Milton, is similarly impressed with the magnificence of Milton's prose. Says he: "They are monuments of our language so remarkable that Milton's prose works must always be resorted to by students as long as English remains

a medium of ideas." As James Russell Lowell said, "It was an organ that Milton mastered, mighty in compass, capable equally of the tempest's ardors or the slim delicacy of the flute; and sometimes it bursts forth in great crashes through his prose, as if he touched it for solace in the intervals of his toil."

We know more of the details of Milton's life than of any author of his time. His biography in six octavo volumes by David Masson is one of the most exhaustive works of its kind in the English language. It may, however, be epitomized as a life of hard work, political controversy, and superhuman diligence in the pursuit of learning. Liberty was the consuming and obsessing passion of his life, and to its hallowed service he gave his best years in controversy with royalty upon the one hand and Puritanism on the other. Like Lessing in Germany, he struggled unceasingly for the freedom of the press, and his "Areopagitica" will forever remain among the conspicuous monuments erected to the freedom of speech. Of freedom he said:

"None can love freedom heartily but good men; the rest love not freedom, but license, which never hath more scope or more indulgence than under tyrants. Hence it is tyrants are not oft offended by, nor stand much in doubt of bad men, as being all naturally servile; but in whom virtue and true worth is most eminent, them they fear in earnest, as by right their masters; against them lies all their hatred and corruption."

But not until his public career was ended, his period of storm and stress was over and his life's work was nearly done, did Milton find leisure for his greatest work. Then it was, when ambition's hopes were withered and most earthly ties were severed; then, when in blindness and poverty his sun was sinking among the clouds, did the farewell beams of his mighty genius burst upon the world in a flood of eternal light. When the raucous voice of controversy became inaudible to his ear the celestial voices entered and the noise of the rabble gave way to the harmonies of the infinite. When the carnal beauties of the world faded away before his sightless eyes, "the celestial light shone inward," and he visualized the gleaming armaments of Heaven in their glorious

pageantry of golden light. Then did his mighty harp vibrate to the unseen touch, and the Spirit vouchsafed answer to his prayer:

“ . . . . . what in me is dark  
Illumine, what is low raise and support;  
That to the height of this great argument  
I may assert Eternal Providence,  
And justify the ways of God to men.”

The *Paradise Lost* was finished in 1665, and was published two years later. For grandeur and sublimity it is unequalled in the English language, and its elevated style is matched in modern times by none but Dante. The thunder-roll of his noble periods finds no echo in the English tongue. “The *Paradise Lost* is looked upon, by the best judges, as the greatest production, or at least the noblest work of genius, in our language,” says Joseph Addison. Samuel Johnson says: “Before the greatness displayed in Milton’s poem, all other greatness shrinks away.” Hume declared him to be “the most wonderfully sublime of any poet in any language—Homer, Lucretius and Tasso not excepted.” Certainly the history of literature affords no other example of a work so stupendous in its magnificence, brought to completion under conditions less conducive to perfection in literary work.

“His blindness seems to have been complete before 1654,” writes Hallam in his *Literature of Europe*; “and I scarcely think that he had begun his poem before the anxiety and trouble into which the public strife of the commonwealth and the Restoration had thrown him gave leisure for immortal occupations. Then the remembrance of early reading came over his dark and lonely path like the moon emerging from the clouds. Then it was that the muse was truly his; not only as she poured her creative inspiration into his mind, but as the daughter of Memory, coming with fragments of ancient melodies, the voice of Euripides, and Homer, and Tasso; sounds that he had loved in youth, and treasured up for the solace of his age. They who, though not enduring

the calamity of Milton, have known what it is, when afar from books, in solitude or in travelling, or in the intervals of worldly care, to feed on poetical recollections, to murmur over the beautiful lines whose cadence had long delighted their ear, to recall the sentiments and images which retain by association the charm that early years once gave them—they will feel the inestimable value of committing to the memory, in the prime of its power, what it will easily receive and indelibly retain."

But Milton's memory, marvelous as it was, did not alone suffice. He was obliged to call upon his daughters, and when they, perchance, rebelled, upon his friends, to read to him the countless works whose beauty and whose truth he was to transfuse, in the alembic of his genius, into the priceless gems of his poesy. Some writers have intimated that Milton owed his *Paradise Lost* to Grotius, to Vondel, or to Andreini. The drama of the fall of man was presented by Hugh Grotius in "*Adamus Exsul*." The same theme was exploited by another great Dutchman, Joost Van den Vondel, in his "*Lucifer*" and his "*Adam Ballingschap*." Andreini attempted an Italian play, or *sacra rappresentazione*, in manner and form resembling the Spanish auto. But none of these productions could have been of great service to Milton, although he was familiar with them all. He is nearer to Vondel only because both took Sophocles and Euripides for their models.

In 1671 "*Paradise Regained*" and "*Samson Agonistes*" were published. "Nothing," says Goethe, "has ever been done so entirely in the sense of the Greeks, as *Samson Agonistes*." In 1674 Milton died, as one has said, "old and blind and fallen on evil days," yet "with his Titanic proportions and independent loneliness, the most impressive figure in English literature." Let us quote, in conclusion, from the beautiful tribute of Gray:

"He passed the flaming bounds of place and time—  
The living throne, the sapphire-blaze,  
Where angels tremble, while they gaze,  
He saw; but, blasted with excess of light,  
Closed his eyes in endless night."

#### IV.

#### ADDISON.

Joseph Addison, born May 1, 1672, the son of an English clergyman, entered Oxford at the age of fifteen, and soon became noted for his proficiency in Latin verse. On leaving Oxford in 1699 he was, through the instrumentality of Lord Halifax, granted a pension of about \$1,500.00 per annum, and soon set forth upon a continental tour in order to perfect himself in the modern languages, and augment his qualifications for the diplomatic service.

At Paris he met Boileau and Malebranche. He travelled over France, Italy, Switzerland and parts of Germany and returned to England after an absence of nearly four years, only to find his pension discontinued and his friends bereft of power. For his living he was forced to rely upon his pen. At this low state of his fortunes there happily intervened the battle of Blenheim. "It was a famous victory," as old Kasper said, but at the time there was apparently a woeful lack of British poets to properly record its fame. It was Addison's opportunity. At this juncture he was approached by an emissary of the government with the request that he indite a few lines, in praise of the great Duke of Marlborough and his "famous victory." Addison responded with "The Campaign," a poem which was at once immensely popular, but which has been preserved from oblivion by its one beautiful and powerful simile, wherein he likens Marlborough, in the heat of battle, to the angel of the tempest, which

"Rides in the whirlwind and directs the storm."

Addison was now safely and irrevocably launched upon a political career. His political faction not only lauded him as the greatest of living poets, but showered him with official preferments as well. In his short but brilliant life—for he died at forty-seven—he held the office of Under-Secretary of State, Sec-

retary of State, was twice Secretary of Ireland, and for many years sat as a member of Parliament. His popularity did not wax and wane with the fortunes of his political party, but continued to the end of his life. And the reason is not far to seek.

It is difficult to imagine a more equable temperament than that of Joseph Addison. Whether we find him immersed in problems of international politics, winning or losing political campaigns, writing tragedies or Latin verses, whiling away an evening with friends over a social bottle at Button's, or busying himself with plans for the "Spectator," he was ever the serene and gentle spirit that still gleams in the pages of his essays. Neither the envenomed jealousy of Pope nor the petulance of Steele, neither the taunts of political partisans nor the envious shafts of literary rivals could provoke his wrath or mar the classic dignity of his unruffled poise. It is difficult, indeed, to dissociate the personality of Addison from his essays. He could truly have said, with Montaigne, "I am my essays."

It is as an essayist only that we must consider him. Without the charming pages of the Spectator, the Freeholder, the Guardian and the Tatler, posterity would hardly concern itself about his other works, notwithstanding Boileau's praise of some of his verses, and notwithstanding Voltaire's opinion that Addison's "Cato" ranks above the tragedies of Shakespeare.

Addison made morality fashionable. That was his great achievement. In the words of Taine, "For the first time, Addison reconciled virtue with elegance, taught duty in an accomplished style, and made pleasure subservient to reason." The style of the essays, for the purposes intended, is inimitable. It is wanting in that fire and spirit which the French call "verve." It does not possess the rugged strength which distinguishes Lessing among the Germans. It is not so polemical as that of either Milton or Macaulay. Yet in his chosen field and upon his own ground, there are few prose writers, in any language, who may be regarded as superior to Joseph Addison.

Addison intrigues the reader by his ingratiating courtesy, his polite deference, his broad humanity, his uniform civility. He can, upon occasion, be archly politic. His piquant grace, his tact-

ful, gliding elegance, his moderation and calmness, are resources which never fail; while, over all his harmonious phrasing, his balanced sentences, and the purling suavity of his rounded periods, there are suffused the rosy lights of a modest gayety, a sweet reasonableness, an urbane sanity, which weave a captivating spell. In this fashion did Addison lead his generation to higher literary levels than it had known before, while divorcing literature from vice. Every reader is familiar with Samuel Johnson's famous pronouncement, in his *Lives of the Poets*: "Whoever wishes to attain an English style, familiar, but not coarse, and elegant, but not ostentatious, must give his days and nights to the volumes of Addison." Macaulay declared that "His best essays approach near to absolute perfection, nor is their excellence more wonderful than their variety. . . . As a moral satirist he stands unrivalled. If ever the best Tatlers and Spectators were equalled in their own kind, we should be inclined to guess that it must have been by the lost comedies of Menander. If we wish to find anything more vivid than Addison's best portraits, we must go either to Shakespeare or to Cervantes."

Two of Addison's shorter poems are of unusual quality. Both are profoundly religious in sentiment. The first is an ode of gratitude for his safe return from his continental tour. We shall quote but a single stanza:

"How are thy servants blest, O Lord!

How sure is their defense!

Eternal wisdom is their guide,

Their help Omnipotence."

The poet Robert Burns said, in a letter to Dr. Moore, that this was the first poem he ever knew, and he describes its powerful effect upon his childish fancy. The other famous ode of Addison's is the well-known hymn, beginning

"The spacious firmament on high."

His Christian optimism is disclosed in the following excerpt from No. 381 of the *Spectator*: "An inward cheerfulness is an im-



plicit praise and thanksgiving to Providence under all its dispensations. It is a kind of acquiescence in the state wherein we are placed, and a secret approbation of the Divine Will in his conduct towards man." After studying these beautiful essays, and the still more beautiful character of their author, one is impelled to exclaim, with Thackeray: "Commend me to this dear preacher without orders, this parson in the tie-wig. When this man looks from the world whose weakness he describes so benevolently up to the Heaven which shines over us all, I can hardly fancy a human face lighted up with a more serene rapture, a human intellect thrilling with purer love and adoration than Joseph Addison."

## V.

### POPE.

From the age of Milton to that of Byron the greatest name in English poesy is that of Alexander Pope. Thackeray calls him "one of the greatest literary artists England has seen."

Born in 1688, his life of forty-six years was a struggle with almost every adverse condition which could possibly beset the human frame. He was a life-long invalid. In physical stature he was almost a dwarf, being but four feet in height. He was so frail as to be unable to dress himself without assistance. In addition to these physical handicaps he was born and reared a Roman Catholic, and was thus, by the harsh laws of the time, debarred from public office and from many lucrative professions. But one career was open to him, and that was literature. For it he sedulously prepared himself. He was almost entirely self-educated, never having attended school after his twelfth year.

Pope's compositions are all models of meticulous care. No author, before or since his day, has worked harder to subject every sentence to the highest degree of polish. He overlooks nothing. He leaves nothing undone to impart the keenest brilliance and the most perfect balance to each line and stanza of his work. He is, therefore, as Johnson says, "read with perpetual delight."

Says Taine, the French critic, discussing the youthful triumphs of Pope: "At sixteen, his pastorals bore witness to a correctness which no one had possessed, not even Dryden. To read these choice words, these exquisite arrangements of syllables, this science of division and rejection, this style so fluent and pure, these graceful images rendered still more graceful by the diction, and all this artificial and many-tinted garden of flowers which he called pastoral, people thought of the first eclogues of Virgil. \* \* \* When later they appeared in one volume, the public was dazzled. The same year the poet of twenty-one finished his Essay on

Criticism, a sort of *Ars Poetica*. It is the kind of a poem a man might write at the end of his career, when he has handled all modes of writing, and has grown gray in criticism; and in this subject, whose treatment demands a whole literary life, he was in an instant as ripe as Boileau." In this poem, says Dr. Johnson, Pope has given us "the finest simile in our language:"

"Hills peep o'er hills, and Alps on Alps arise."

From the same poem the following well-known lines are taken:

"Good nature and good sense must ever join:  
To err is human; to forgive, divine."

Pope's Epistle from Eloisa to Abelard, the most notable of his poems of passion and tenderness, was received with a burst of enthusiasm. In it "the beauty of his imagery and descriptions, the exquisite melody of his versification, rising and falling like the tones of an Eolian harp, have never been surpassed." Johnson declared it among "the happiest productions of the human mind." It was rapturously praised by De Quincey and others. Lord Byron preferred it to the famous ode of Sappho. A few lines will indicate the trilling, harmonic sweetness of the poem. At the close of the portrait of the innocent nun, she is made to say:

"How happy is the blameless vestal's lot!  
The world forgetting, by the world forgot:  
Eternal sunshine of the spotless mind!  
Each prayer accepted, and each wish resigned;  
Labor and rest, that equal periods keep;  
Obedient slumbers that can wake and weep;  
Desires composed, affections ever even;  
Tears that delight, and sighs that waft to heav'n.  
Grace shines around her, with serenest beams,  
And whisp'ring angels prompt her golden dreams.  
For her th' unfading rose of Eden blooms,

And wings of seraphs shed divine perfumes;  
For her the Spouse prepares the bridal ring,  
For her white virgins hymeneals sing;  
To sounds of heavenly harps she dies away,  
And melts in visions of eternal day."

Of Pope's Rape of the Lock, considered the greatest masterpiece of the sprightly style, Leslie Stephen said: "No more brilliant, sparkling, vivacious trifle is to be found in our literature." It is probably the greatest mock-heroic poem in any language. "It is," says Johnson, "the most airy, the most ingenious, and the most delightful of all Pope's compositions."

At the age of twenty-five Pope began his translation of Homer. He was already rated as the greatest living poet. The six volumes of the *Illiad* were published during the years 1715-1720. This publication rendered his fame secure, and placed him an immeasurable distance above and beyond all poets then living in England. Pope's Homer lacks fidelity to the original text, but, for all that, Johnson called it "the noblest version of poetry the world has ever seen." Gray predicted that no other translation would ever equal it. Byron said that as a boy he read it with rapture, and that no one would ever put it aside except for the original. From this work Pope reaped a profit of about \$40,000. He had now gained both means and leisure to conduct his war on the Dunces. Pope was of a nervous, suspicious and irritable nature, given to introspection, his morbid mind naturally dwelling upon fancied injuries, and he decided, once for all, to even up all scores with his literary rivals. In this design he was encouraged by his ardent though indiscreet friend Dean Swift, himself the greatest satirist of the time, and to whom the *Dunciad* was dedicated. The poem abounds in sharp and cutting thrusts and displays a wealth of genius worthy of a far better purpose. But the keenest and most finished bit of satire Pope ever wrote was the malevolent but powerful characterization of Addison, which appeared in the prologue to the *Satires*, and in which he said that Addison could

“Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,  
And, without sneering, teach the rest to sneer.”

Pope's *Essay on Man* is possibly the work with which the majority of his readers are most familiar. It is brilliant in style and finish, and rich in epigram. There is nothing exactly like it elsewhere. It abounds in popular passages, and among the most familiar are these lines:

“Vice is a monster of such horrid mien,  
As to be hated needs but to be seen;  
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,  
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.”

And these:

“Hope springs eternal in the human breast;  
Man never is, but always to be blest.”

And this familiar couplet:

“Know then thyself, presume not God to scan;  
The proper study of mankind is man.”

This work, with its doctrine that “whatever is, is right,” together with its numerous philosophical speculations, drew replies from Voltaire in France, from Lessing in Germany, and from Crousaz, a Swiss philosopher.

In his introductions and prefaces, Pope often displays great power as a writer of lucid prose, as well as a vast critical insight. Thus, in the preface to his translation of Homer, he says: “Homer was the greater genius; Virgil, the better artist; in the one, we most admire the man; in the other, the work. Homer hurries us with a commanding impetuosity; Virgil leads us with an attractive majesty. Homer scatters with a generous profusion; Virgil bestows with a careful magnificence. Homer, like the Nile, pours out his riches with a sudden overflow; Virgil, like a river in its banks, with a constant stream. And when we look upon their machines, Homer seems like his own Jupiter, in his terrors, shak-

ing Olympus, scattering the lightnings, and firing the heavens; Virgil, like the same power, in his benevolence, counselling with the gods, laying plans for empires, and ordering his whole creation." It is doubtful if any critic, ancient or modern, has so splendidly and succinctly compared the two great epic masters of antiquity.

Pope's imitations of Horace are among the most delightful of his creations, and are quite as charming as the original. Among his shorter poems his Universal Prayer is one of the most beautiful. Nothing can be finer than this:

"Teach me to feel another's wo,  
To hide the fault I see:  
That mercy I to others show,  
That mercy show to me."

He wrote too little in this simple strain. This poem and an ode, *The Dying Christian to His Soul* (written at the request of Steele), show Pope at the height of his lyric power. They breathe forth a solemn purity, a noble tenderness and a softened, subdued and modest dignity so deeply consonant to the sweet serenity of prayer.

In his fifty-sixth year, after a life of strife and pain, Pope passed away so peacefully that the watchers at his bedside could not distinguish the moment of his death; so peacefully, indeed, that it seemed as if the powers of nature, hushed in the presence of expiring genius, had obeyed the behest of his own beautiful ode:

"Cease, fond nature, cease thy strife,  
And let me languish into life!"

## VI.

### BYRON.

Lord George Gordon Byron, the foremost English poet since Alexander Pope, is pre-eminently the great revolutionary poet of modern times.

Born in 1788, just as the wave of revolution was threatening to submerge all nations in its mighty sweep, he reached maturity at the close of the so-called Napoleonic wars, when his precocious love of liberty and his inborn sense of justice were rudely shocked to behold a world shackled in the meshes of the Holy Alliance and writhing hopelessly in the gyves of tyranny, stupidity and cant.

The publication (at the age of nineteen) of his "Hours of Idleness" having evoked an exasperating criticism in the Edinburgh Review, Byron replied with his stinging "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers," in the year 1809, and in the same year departed for a tour of the Mediterranean countries. He returned in two years, and at once published the first two cantos of "The Pilgrimage of Childe Harold." His reputation was thus immediately established, at the early age of twenty-two. In his own words, "I woke to find myself famous." In the next four years he published "The Corsair," "The Siege of Corinth," and a number of other metrical tales which greatly increased his fame. And then, in 1815, he married. His troubles now began. Within a year his wife left him, nobody knew exactly why. Gossip busied itself with mendacious tales. Churlish mediocrity, Puritan prudery, snobbishness and cant, with their maudlin blubberings, perceived their chance. Slander unleashed its envenomed dart. They drove forth the proud spirit they could not bend, and they made his name a byword and an hissing among the people. In 1816 he left England to return no more.

He now had but eight more years to live. But they were busy years—years crowded with great works, such as "The Pri-

soner of Chillon," "Manfred," "Mazappa," "Don Juan," the last two cantos of "Childe Harold" and indeed, the greater part of his life's work. Yet we are solemnly told that the period of his voluntary exile was a period of almost total depravity, a riot of unrestrained dissipation. The marvel is that so vast a volume of wonderful creations could have proceeded from a single pen in so short a time. But his enemies have preferred to slight his creations and magnify his recreations.

Lord Macaulay, who is usually wise even when he cannot be just, is neither wise nor just in his estimate of Byron. "And a few years more will destroy whatever yet remains of that magical potency which once belonged to the name of Byron," he wrote, in 1830. But Matthew Arnold wrote, in 1881, of Byron and Wordsworth: "When the year 1900 is turned, and our nation comes to recount her poetic glories in the century which has then just ended, the first names with her will be these." English critics in general, have not comprehended Byron as have the greatest intellects of other lands. The Frenchman, Taine, observes that "all styles appear dull beside his," and that "he is so great that from him alone we shall learn more truths of his country than from all the rest combined." Taine says that Byron's "Manfred" is "twin-brother to the greatest poem of the age, Goethe's Faust." Goethe said of Byron: "The English can show no poet who is to be compared with him. . . . I cannot enough admire his genius." Goethe advised Eckermann to learn English only to read Byron, and added: "A character of such eminence has never existed before, and will probably never come again. Tasso's epic has maintained its fame, but Byron is the burning bush which reduces the cedar of Lebanon to ashes." Taine concludes: "If Goethe was the poet of the universe Byron was the poet of the individual; and if, in one, German genius found its interpreter, the English genius found its interpreter in the other."

From the verdict of Goethe and Taine there is no dissent on the continent of Europe. "What," asks Castelar, "does Spain not owe to Byron? From his mouth came our hopes and fears. He has baptized us with his blood. There is no one with whose being some song of his is not woven." Dr. Karl Elze, an authority on



the English classics, who held the chair of English literature in the University of Halle, names Byron as one of the four greatest poets of England, and also marks him as the intellectual parent of Lamartine and Musset in France, of Espronceda in Spain, of Puschkin in Russia, of Heine in Germany, and of Berchet in Italy.

The great Italian Giuseppe Mazzini, in one of the most beautiful essays he has given to the world, discusses and compares Byron and Goethe.

"Never did 'the eternal spirit of the chainless mind' make a brighter apparition amongst us," he says of Byron. "He seems at times a transformation of that immortal Prometheus, of whom he has written so nobly; whose cry of agony, yet of futurity, sounded above the cradle of the European world; and whose grand and mysterious form, transfigured by time, reappears from age to age, between the entombment of one epoch and the accession of another, to wail forth the lament of genius, tortured by the presentiment of things it will not see realized in its time. . . . When he heard the cry of nationality and liberty burst forth in the land he had loved and sung in early youth, he broke his harp and set forth. While the Christian Powers were protocolizing or worse—while the Christian nations were doling forth the alms of a few piles of ball in aid of the Cross struggling with the Crescent, he, the poet, and pretended skeptic, hastened to throw his fortune, his genius, and his life at the feet of the first people that had arisen in the name of the nationality and liberty he loved. . . .

"The day will come when democracy will remember all that it owes to Byron. England, too, will, I hope, one day remember the mission—so entire English, yet hitherto overlooked by her—which Byron fulfilled on the Continent; the European role given by him to English literature, and the appreciation and sympathy for England which he awakened amongst us.

"Before he came, all that was known of English literature was the French translation of Shakespeare, and the anathema hurled by Voltaire against the 'intoxicated barbarian.' It is since Byron that we Continentalists have learned to study Shakespeare and other English writers. . . . England will one day feel how ill it is—not for Byron but for herself—that the foreigner who

stands upon her shores should search in vain in that temple which should be her national Pantheon, for the poet beloved and admired by all the nations of Europe, and for whose death Greece and Italy wept as it had been the noblest of their own sons."

Mazzini's rebuke is but too well deserved. When Byron, at Missolonghi, in 1824, had given his life for Greece, the Greek chieftains desired that he should sleep in the Temple of Theseus, at Athens. English friends, however, preferred that he should rest with the poets in Westminster Abbey. But when the body arrived in England the Dean of Westminster closed the doors of the English Pantheon against the ashes of the noblest Englishman of the nineteenth century, and the funeral procession moved sadly northward to Newstead Abbey, the ancestral seat of the poet's family.

"When I was a boy I read Byron's *Prisoner of Chillon*. From that hour I have hated oppression in all its forms." The speaker was a United States Senator, William Joel Stone. The incident is recalled as showing the world-wide influence of the great English poet who revered Washington, admired Franklin, eulogized Daniel Boone, referred to Patrick Henry as "the forest-born Domesthenes," and who said: "Give me a republic. The king-times are fast vanishing; there will be blood shed like water and tears like mist, but the peoples will conquer in the end. I shall not live to see it, but I foresee it." In the "*Chillon*" poem, in "*Prometheus*," and, indeed, wherever innocence and virtue tremble in the clutch of tyrannic power, Byron shows unfeigned sympathy for those who suffer and are cast down. Always and everywhere in the strife between freedom and autocracy, Byron is the friend of man.

Taine regards "*Don Juan*" as Byron's masterpiece. But that, we suspect, is only a characteristically French judgment. There are brilliant passages in all his poems. And there is very little of his work that fails to sustain the reader's interest. This is especially true of *Childe Harold*. Everywhere are sunbursts of genius which light his pages with a glow that dims not with the lapse of time. Byron abounds in the sublime and beautiful. He may not be always correct. Nor is the diapason of the tempest always

correct, when measured by the musical scale; but it drives its message home. And so does Byron speak in words that cause the blood to mount, whether he voice the passions of the heart or paint the splendors of the storm. There is in him, as Swinburne said, "the splendid and imperishable excellence which covers all his offenses and outweighs all his defects; the excellence of sincerity and strength."

Byron struck the note of grandeur and sublimity as it was struck by no other English poet excepting Milton. His apostrophe to the ocean, at the end of *Childe Harold*, is an example of this quality which is unsurpassed in any language. His description of Waterloo, in the third canto of this poem, stands alone. Beside it all other descriptions are colorless and mute. According to Longinus, the primary source of the sublime in writing is boldness and grandeur of thought. In this respect, Byron will not suffer in comparison with Homer or the Hebrew Scriptures. Consider, for example, his "Destruction of Sennacherib," closing with these lines:

"And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,  
Has melted like snow in the glance of the Lord."

Or his "Darkness":

"I had a dream, which was not all a dream.  
The bright sun was extinguished, and the stars  
Did wander darkling in the eternal space,  
Rayless, and pathless, and the icy earth  
Swung blind and blackening in the moonless air," etc.

Similar examples could be adduced without number. So powerful has been the appeal of the awful and the supernatural in Byron that he has been often called the poet of gloom, of melancholy, of hopeless woe. But such critics overlook both "Beppo" and "Don Juan."

And there is another side of Byron, neither awe-inspiring and terrible, nor frivolous and amusing, but of surpassing lyrical beauty, sweetness and grace, such as "Fair Thoe Well," "She

Walks in Beauty," "Know Ye the Land," "The Isles of Greece," "Maid of Athens," and other poems of like character. Sir Walter Scott has truly said: "As various in composition as Shakespeare himself, Lord Byron has embraced every type of human life, and sounded every string on the divine harp, from its slightest to its most powerful and heart-astounding tones."

Byron was versed in Latin and Greek, and translated from both languages. He was master of Italian and French, but knew little of Spanish and no German. Of Goethe, who knew and understood him so well, he himself says that he knew nothing excepting a part of Faust which was read to him and orally translated by a friend. He adored Alexander Pope almost to the point of fanaticism, detested Wordsworth, and was a devoted admirer of Dante, Tasso and the other Italian immortals—preferring Tasso to Milton.

As we are unable to trace Byron to any particular model, so also, are we unable to point to his successor. Like Dante, he rules alone. Like the lightning from the cloud he came, and to the stormy elements he has returned. He has burned his way into the hearts of men, and his fame will last while literature endures.

## VII.

### SCOTT.

Sir Walter Scott, the founder of the historical novel, and composer of some of the most stirring and beautiful martial poetry ever written in the British isles, was born in Edinburgh, August 15, 1771, the son of a Scotch lawyer. Young Scott was called to the bar in 1792, and carried on a desultory practice for fourteen years, but was at no time wedded to his profession.

Scott was thoroughly conversant with Spanish, French, Italian and German. He first became seriously interested in literature through his study of German. His first publication was a translation, in 1796, of two of Burger's ballads. In 1799 he published his translation of Goethe's "Goetz von Berlichingen." From his early youth Scott had been a student of the ballad. In 1802, at the age of thirty-one, he gave to the world his "Border Minstrelsy," which gained for him immediate popularity. With the publication of "The Lay of the Last Minstrel," in 1805, he became the most popular poet of the day. "Marmion" followed in 1808, and "The Lady of the Lake," in 1810. His later poetical works were not so well received. In 1814 the first of his novels, "Waverly," appeared, followed by that incomparable succession of romances during the next eighteen years, which made their author the most popular prose writer in all the world. He continued to write until his paralytic hand could no longer grasp the pen, and death came in 1832, about six months after the death of Goethe.

Scott is not among the greatest of poets, and yet in his greater poems there are lines which will never die. While love of country endures in the hearts of men, the patriot will not forget these lines from the first stanza, Canto vi., of "The Lay of the Last Minstrel":

"Breathes there a man with soul so dead

Who never to himself has said,  
 This is my own, my native land!  
 Whose heart has ne'er within him burn'd  
 As home his footsteps he has turned  
 From wandering on a foreign strand?  
 If such there breathe, go, mark him well!  
 For him no minstrel raptures swell;  
 High though his titles, proud his name,  
 Boundless his wealth as wish can claim,—  
 Despite those titles, power and pelf,  
 The wretch, concentered all in self,  
 Living, shall forfeit fair renown,  
 And doubly dying, shall go down  
 To the vile dust from whence he sprung,  
 Unwep't, unhonor'd and unsung."

Many critics have thought "Marmion" to be superior to all the other metrical creations of Scott. Certainly no poem of his abounds in more fine passages, or has a greater tendency to fire the blood. What can be finer than his description of the castle, in the first canto?

"Day set on Norham's castled steep,  
 And Tweed's fair river, broad and deep,  
 And Cheviot's mountains lone:  
 The battled towers, the donjon keep,  
 The loophole grates, where captives weep,  
 The flanking walls that round it sweep,  
 In yellow luster shone.  
 The warriors on the turrets high,  
 Moving athwart the evening sky,  
 Seem'd forms of giant height.  
 Their armor, as it caught the rays,  
 Flashed back again the western blaze,  
 In lines of dazzling light."

These lines, with two succeeding stanzas, are seldom equalled in descriptive poetry. Indeed, the entire poem abounds in beauties which so strike the ear or touch the heart of mankind as to assure the immortality of the work. Such, for example, is this, from the sixth canto:

“O Woman! in our hours of ease  
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,  
And variable as the shade  
By the light quivering aspen made;  
When pain and anguish wring the brow,  
A ministering angel thou.”

Such lines may not present the highest form of poetry; but, nevertheless, they cannot be forgotten. It may be doubted if there was ever penned a more stirring picture of a battle scene than this, from the same canto, stanza 32:

“The war that for a space did fail,  
Now trebly thundering swell’d the gale,  
And—Stanley! was the cry;  
A light on Marmion’s visage spread,  
And fired his glazing eye:  
With dying hand, above his head,  
He shook the fragment of his blade,  
And shouted “Victory!—  
Charge, Chester, charge! On, Stanley, on!  
Were the last words of Marmion.”

Mackintosh says that “The Lady of the Lake has nothing so good as the death of Marmion.” But where shall we find a sweeter bugle note than the song in the first canto of *The Lady of the Lake*:

“Soldier, rest! thy warfare o’er,  
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking;  
Dream of battlefields no more,” etc.

The Highland boat song, in the second canto, is another masterpiece. The famous battle scene in the sixth canto of *The Lady of the Lake* may be said to at least rival anything in *Marmion*—or elsewhere in poetry of its kind. Particularly striking is the 18th stanza. The reader can almost hear the clash of sword and lance, as the cry rings out—

“Where, where was Roderick then!  
One blast upon his bugle horn  
Were worth a thousand men!”

Scott was inspired to write fiction, he tells us, by reading the novels of Cervantes. The success of “*Waverly*” was so complete that Scott devoted the greater part of the remainder of his life to writing historical novels. Seldom has the world witnessed such an unbroken train of literary successes—*Kenilworth*, *Old Mortality*, *Ivanhoe*, *Redgauntlet*, *Guy Mannering*, *The Antiquary*, *Rob Roy*—we need not enumerate the well remembered names. A hundred years have passed, and their hold upon the public cannot yet be said to be broken.

Scott gained almost a million dollars by his writings, and lost it all. The failure of his publishers involved him to the extent of half a million dollars. The last six years of his life were spent in a brave struggle to pay the debt. Struggling against advancing age and the insidious approach of disease, he battled on, and could he have lived another ten years he would have paid it all. He had earned nearly \$200,000.00 for his creditors, when he breathed his last, at his beloved Abbotsford, on September 15, 1832.

Scott was the kindest and most genial of men. As one of his old Scotch companions said of him, “whether drunk or sober, he was aye the gentleman.” He lived an innocent and wholesome life, and he leaves no printed word to soil his memory. When death approached he called for Lockhart, his son-in-law. “Lockhart,” said he, “I may have but a minute to speak to you. My dear, be a good man—be virtuous—be religious—be a good man. Nothing else will give you any comfort when you come to lie here.”



## VIII.

### WORDSWORTH.

William Wordsworth was born in 1770. He was graduated from Cambridge at the age of twenty-one. After two visits to France, and an attempt to take part with the Girondists in the French Revolution, Wordsworth returned to England to spend (with the exception of an occasional excursion) the remainder of his uneventful life in the country, chiefly at Grasmere and Rydal Mount, in the lake region. Early in life he became intimate with Samuel Taylor Coleridge. The two poets visited Germany in 1799, where Coleridge perfected himself in German and began his translation of Schiller's "Wallenstein."

Wordsworth's first volume was "Lyrical Ballads," published jointly by himself and Coleridge, in 1798. This volume marks the beginning of the Romantic movement in English poetry, and is epochal in its literary significance. The volume contains Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner," but the greater portion of the remainder was the work of Wordsworth. The book was republished in 1800 and in 1802. His "Ode to Duty" was brought out in 1805, and the "Ode on the Intimations of Immortality" in 1806. "The Excursion" and "Laodamia" were published in 1814. Other poems followed at intervals during the next twenty years. He wrote practically nothing during the last fifteen years of his life. When Southey died, in 1843, Wordsworth was appointed Poet Laureate, an honor which he at first refused and was with difficulty induced to accept. Seven years later he died, at the age of eighty.

For at least a quarter of a century, and during the period in which he was producing his best work, Wordsworth was obliged to endure the combined assault of all the great critics in England and Scotland, besides the scorn of the majority of the poets of his day. But his faith in himself, in his work, and in his mission, at no time faltered. He cared nothing for praise or blame, and

seldom read any of the criticisms of his works.

Wordsworth was no great lover of books. But his love of nature amounted to an infatuation. His love of rocks and lakes and flowers and trees was almost as vehement and personal as that which is recorded of St. Francis of Assisi, in Section XII. of "The Mirror of Perfection." Nearly the whole of his long life was devoted to the serene contemplation of nature's grandeur and beauty, and to companionship with the elements. Far from the busy haunts of men, drinking in the splendors of the sunset or the glories of the dawn, weaving his dreams among the flitting clouds, claiming comradeship with the mountains and the stars, with ear attuned alike to the carol of the lark or the whisper of the leaf, Wordsworth knew and loved the natural world as no other English poet ever did. And it is this love and this knowledge which gleam, in all his works, with an intensity which draws his devotees as if obsessed by a spell, and makes of his following a cult. "The very image of Wordsworth," writes De Quincey, for example, "as I prefigured it to my own planet-struck eye, crushed my faculties as before Elijah or St. Paul."

As Mathew Arnold says (Essays in Criticism), "Wordsworth's poetry is great because of the extraordinary power with which Wordsworth feels the joy offered to us in nature, the joy offered to us in the simple primary affections and duties; and because of the extraordinary power with which, in case after case, he shows us this joy and renders it so as to make us share it." But when Dr. Arnold, in the same essay, places Wordsworth before all English poets excepting Milton and Shakespeare, before all the French since Molière, before all the Germans excepting Goethe, and before all the Italians since the sixteenth century, he goes farther than many judicious critics will care to accompany him.

Saintsbury declares that the greater odes of Wordsworth are unsurpassed by any poet, not even excepting Milton. It is in his odes and sonnets, indeed, that Wordsworth strikes the majestic note which places him far above the majority of the poets of his time. Of these splendid productions the following sonnet is an example:

"The world is too much with us: late and soon,  
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:  
Little we see in nature that is ours;  
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!  
The Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;  
The winds that will be howling at all hours,  
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;  
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;  
It moves us not.—Great God! I'd rather be  
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;  
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,  
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;  
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;  
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn."

An excerpt from his great ode on "Intimations of Immortality" is quoted in the essay on Plato, on page 44 of this volume. Another of his most beautiful poems is the one entitled "Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey." It is in these lines that he gives us so much that we may now characterize as truly "Wordsworthian." A specimen phrase is this:

"That best portion of a good man's life,—  
His little, nameless, unremembered acts  
Of kindness and of love."

In this poem we also find these characteristic lines:

"A sense sublime  
Of something far more deeply interfused,  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
And the round ocean and the living air  
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man,—  
A motion and a spirit that impels  
All thinking things, all objects of 'all thought,  
And rolls through all things."

In another of his poems he says:

“Plain living and high thinking are no more.  
The homely beauty of the good old cause  
Is gone; our peace, our fearful innocence,  
And pure religion breathing household laws.”

In the same spirit he writes this, in a letter to a friend: “It is an awful truth, that there neither is nor can be any genuine enjoyment of poetry among nineteen out of twenty of those persons who live, or wish to live, in the broad light of the world—among those who either are, or are striving to make themselves, people of consideration in society. This is a truth, and an awful one; because to be incapable of a feeling of poetry, in my sense of the word, is to be without love of human nature and reverence for God.”

Such thoughts, expressed with such a deep sincerity and spiritual earnestness in his poetry, at first shocked his generation, and then subjected it to his will. In Wordsworth there is peace, because he engenders a train of thought which ends in the holy calm of a soothed and rested mind. John Stuart Mill, in his *Autobiography*, says: “What made Wordsworth’s poems a medicine for my state of mind, was that they expressed not mere outward beauty, but states of feeling, and of thought colored by feeling, under the excitement of beauty. They seemed to be the very culture of the feelings which I was in quest of. In them I seemed to draw from a source of inward joy, of sympathetic and imaginative pleasure, which could be shared by all human beings, which had no connection with struggle or imperfection, but would be made richer by every improvement in the physical or social condition of mankind. From them I seemed to learn what would be the perennial sources of happiness, when all the greater evils of life shall have been removed. And I felt myself at once better and happier as I came under their influence.”

Wordsworth had, in his own beautiful words, listened to the “still, sad music of humanity.” and grasped the rhythm of its secret chords. Upon the whole, there is no better summary of

his work than the sentence uttered by Keble, author of the "Christian Year," who claimed for him "that he had shed a celestial light upon the affections, the occupations, the piety of the poor."

## IX.

### DICKENS.

Charles Dickens is the Shakespeare of the novel. He lives in his characters. We may speak of the books of other authors. But with Dickens the case is far different. We are not interested so much in the novels as we are in the striking personages who inhabit them. Mr. Pecksniff exists for us, apparently, quite independently of the novel "Martin Chuzzlewit." We do not, in the ordinary sense, re-read "The Pickwick Papers." We simply renew our acquaintance with Sam Weller and Mr. Pickwick. Not to know these amiable creatures is to miss half the joy of life. Not to know them connotes a degree of ignorance approximating the stupidity of persons unacquainted with the commonest facts of history. Critics have decried the work of Dickens because of what they term its tendency to caricature, its approach to the grotesque, its proneness to exaggeration. If this indictment is to be taken as true, and if, in consequence, we may truly say that the people of Dickens are not drawn from life, then, indeed, so much the greater genius is Dickens, whose "Imagination bodies forth the forms of things unknown," and whose wondrous gift

"Turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing

A local habitation and a name."

Are there, then, no Pickwicks in the world? If not—all the worse for the world! Does little Nell exist only in Heaven, a kind of glorified Beatrice in Paradise? Perhaps. Out of the fullness of his own experience let the reader judge. But if the Dickens characters are not of this world, if we are never to meet them in the highways and byways of life, then it behooves us to seek without delay those enchanted realms of the imagination wherein they dwell. Let the Scotch poet, Alexander Smith, be our guide:

"If Mr. Dickens's characters were gathered together," says

he, "they would constitute a town populous enough to send a representative to Parliament. Let us enter. The style of architecture is unparalleled. There is an individuality about the buildings. In some obscure way they remind one of human faces. There are houses sly-looking, houses wicked-looking, houses pompous-looking. Heaven bless us! what a rakish pump! What a self-important town-hall. What a hard-hearted prison! The dead walls are covered with advertisements of Mr. Sleary's circus. Newman Noggs comes shambling along. Mr. and Misses Pecksniff come sailing down the sunny side of the street. Miss Mercy's parasol is gay; papa's neckcloth is white and terribly starched. Dick Swiveller leans against a wall, his hands in his pockets, a primrose held between his teeth, contemplating the opera of Punch and Judy, which is being conducted under the management of Messrs. Codling and Short. You turn a corner, and you meet the coffin of little Paul Dombey being borne along. In the afternoon you hear the rich tones of the organ from Miss LaCreevy's first floor, for Tom Pinch has gone there to live now; and as you know all the people as you know your own brothers and sisters, and consequently require no letters of introduction, you go up and talk with the dear old fellow about all his friends and your friends, and towards evening he takes your arm, and you walk out to see poor Nelly's grave."

We no longer require the guidance of the Scotch poet. Returning in the gloaming we pass through Dingley Dell. Wardle's hearty laughter rings among the rafters of the old farm house and lingers along the lonely vale, where sundry figures creep from among the shadows. Note the gruff old sailor, with the bright-faced boy at his side. Anon we hear a voice:

"Wal'r, my boy, in the Proverbs of Solomon you will find the following words: 'May we never want a friend in need nor a bottle to give him.' When found, make a note of." And there comes another, with his eye still fixed on the coast of Greenland—Captain Cuttle's oracular friend, the Admiral! There is a flutter along the hedge. Awast! It is the widow Mac Stinger. Let her pass, with all the little Mac Stingers, an endless proces-

sion of marital bliss. And the woman with her? No, that is not Peggotty. We recognize the shawl.

“And widge I was saying to Mrs. Harris”—

Here she was interrupted by the tones of a flute. It was Mr. Mell. and he blew it “until I almost thought he would gradually blow his whole being into the large hole at the top, and ooze away at the keys.”

And Sairy Gamp concluded that she had no preference as to her ale, excepting that she liked it “reg’lar,” and “draw’d mild.”

See them as they come trooping along the lanes and bypaths of memory, a motly throng, making another pilgrimage to another Canterbury, with one greater than Chaucer for a guide—

“Chambermaid in love with Boots,  
Toodles, Traddles, Tapley, Toots,  
Betsey Trotwood, Mr. Dick,  
Susan Nipper, Mistress Chick,  
Snevellicci, Lilyvick,  
Mantalini’s predilections  
To transfer his warm affections,  
By poor Barnaby and Grip,  
Flora, Dora, Di and Gip,  
Perrybingle, Pinch and Pip—”

But hark! The sound of a coach! Do you not hear the horn of the guard?

“Yoho, among the gathering shades; making of no account the deep reflections of the trees. but scampering on through light and darkness all the same. . . . Yoho, beside the village green, where cricket-players linger yet, and every little indentation made in the grass by bat or wicket, ball or player’s foot, sheds out its perfume on the night. . . .

“Yoho, behind there, stop that bugle for a moment! Come creeping over to the front, along the coach-roof, guard, and, make one at this basket! . . . Ah! It’s long since this bottle of old wine was brought into contact with the mellow breath of night,



you may depend, and rare good stuff it is to wet a bugler's whistle with. Only try it. Don't be afraid of turning up your finger, Bill, another pull! Now take your breath, and try the bugle, Bill. There's music! There's a tone! 'Over the hills and far away,' indeed, Yoho! The skittish mare is all alive tonight. Yoho! Yoho!

"See the bright moon; high up before we know it; making the earth reflect the objects on its breast like water . . .

"Clouds, too! And a mist upon the hollow! Not a dull fog that hides it, but a light, airy gauze-like mist, which in our eyes of modest admiration gives a new charm to the beauties it is spread before. . . . Yoho! Why, now we travel like the moon herself. Hiding this minute in a grove of trees, next minute in a patch of vapor, emerging now upon our broad, clear course, withdrawing now, but always dashing on, our journey is a counterpart of hers. Yoho! A match against the Moon!"

And so we come, not to London with Tom Pinch; but the coach draws up to Dingley Dell, to discharge its cargo of immortals. See them alight, aided by old Tony Weller and Sam! The great Sergeant Buzfuz is there, attended by Mr. Perker of Grey's Inn, and the learned Snubbin. Dr. Blimber, Dodson & Fogg, Mr. Solomon Pell (friend of the Lord Chancellor), Carker with his cat-like teeth, Wickfield and Uriah Heep, Jonas Chuzzlewit and Sykes, Bob Sawyer, Alfred Jingle and Squeers, and all the rest, come tumbling out like the contents of another Noah's Ark, and over all beams the serene countenance of the noble Pickwick himself. They enter at old Wardle's cheery call, to find that Mr. Micawber has the punch all ready, and when they proceed to the hospitable table there sits Tiny Tim, and we hear again his benediction,—“God bless us, every one!”

“Joe!” old Wardle calls; “damn that boy, he's gone to sleep again!”

Peaceful be his slumbers, and may he waken with us all, in the land of the Master's dreams!

As Thackeray said, in his lecture on Charity and Humor, “One might go on, though the task would be endless and needless, chronicling the names of kind folks with whom this kind

genius has made us familiar. Who does not love the Marchioness and Mr. Richard Swiveller? Who does not sympathize, not only with *Oliver Twist*, but his admirable young friend the Artful Dodger? Who has not the inestimable advantage of possessing a Mrs. Nickleby in his own family? Who does not bless Sairey Gamp and wonder at Mrs. Harris? Who does not venerate the chief of that illustrious family who, being stricken by misfortune, wisely and greatly turned his attention to 'coals,' the accomplished, the Epicurean, the dirty, the delightful Micawber?

"I may quarrel with Mr. Dickens's art a thousand and a thousand times, I delight and wonder at his genius; I recognize in it—I speak with awe and reverence—a commission from that Divine Beneficence whose blessed task we know it will one day be to wipe every tear from every eye. Thankfully I take my share of the feast of love and kindness which this gentle and generous, and charitable soul has contributed to the happiness of the world. I take and enjoy my share, and say a benediction for the meal."

The descriptive powers of Dickens are phenomenal. As a delineator of child life he has never had an equal, and the Dickens child-characters have won the heart of the world. His work in this regard is one of the peculiar glories of English literature. In this respect some great literatures are barren. Thus, as Taine remarks, "We have no children in French literature." And, indeed, we can recall very few in either the Italian or the Spanish. In his portraiture of morbidity, of the insane and the feeble-minded, Taine thinks that he is equalled by no writer save Ernst Hoffman. But Balzac is the Continental writer with whom Dickens is most frequently if not most aptly compared. Tolstoy, the great Russian, declared that both Dickens and Balzac produced some inartistic work, but he believed Dickens to be the greater author.

But the most astounding powers of Dickens are called into play when he touches at will the chords of joy and sorrow, plunging from the height of gaiety to the depths of woe, and with equal facility leaping back again, often showering smiles athwart the tears like sunbeams through a mist, and blending pathos and humor in those fascinating mystic soul-tints which no other

artist's hand has ever drawn.

E. P. Whipple, an American critic, observes: "It is difficult to say whether Dickens is more successful in humor or pathos. It is certain that his genius can as readily draw tears as provoke laughter. Sorrow, want, poverty, pain, death, the affections which cling to earth and those which rise above it he represents always with power, and often with marvelous skill. His style, in the serious moods of his mind, has a harmony of flow which often glides unconsciously into metrical arrangement, and is full of those words

'Which fall as soft as snow on the sea,  
And melt in the heart as instantly.'

One source of his pathos is the intense and purified conception he has of moral beauty—of that beauty which comes from a thoughtful brooding over the most solemn and affecting realities of life. The character of little Nell is an illustration. The simplicity of this creation, framed as it is, from the finest elements of human nature, and the unambitious mode of its development through the motley scenes of the Old Curiosity Shop are calculated to make us overlook its rare merit as a work of high poetic genius. Amidst the wolfish malignity of Quilp, the sugared meanness of Brass, the roaring conviviality of Swiveller, amidst scenes of selfishness and shame, of passion and crime, this delicate creation moves along, unsullied, purified, pursuing the good in the simple earnestness of a pure heart, gliding to the tomb as to a sweet sleep, and leaving in every place that her presence beautifies the marks of celestial footprints. Sorrows such as hers, over which so fine a sentiment sheds its consecrations, have been well said to be ill-bartered for the garishness of joy; 'for they win us softly from life, and fit us to die smiling'."

But, quite apart from the benefits of his refreshing humor and the uplifting power of his sweet and ennobling spirituality, Dickens accomplished much for the civic, industrial and social betterment of his generation and for posterity as well. He it was who first attacked imprisonment for debt. He was the first great prison reformer. In the matter of legal administration he

did more than any other man to accomplish the substitution of reasonable codes for the interminable processes of chancery. He smote the "circumlocution office" and made official "red tape" forever unpopular. He launched his bolts against the miserable makeshift of a military commissariat, and from that day forth the lot of a British soldier has been easier and his burdens lighter. He hurled the shafts of his bitter, blighting irony and the terrible force of his heart-stirring pathos against the English factory system, against industrial serfdom in the mines and elsewhere, and the lives of laboring men are better and upon higher standards because of his work. He struck at the debasing tyranny of the petty tyrants of the school room, and the lives of little children have been made happier and brighter as a result. But, above all else, there resounds throughout his life's work the pure note of democracy and the death-knell of snobbishness in all its forms, and always and everywhere the appeal for justice rings clear and true.

Charles Dickens was born in 1812, and died in 1870. The hard and miserable life of his early youth is paraphrased to some extent, in his "David Copperfield," as we are informed by Foster in his life of Dickens. His youth and early manhood saw little of the brighter side of life. But, for all that, no writer in all the literature of the world has a better right to be called The Apostle of Good Cheer.

## X.

### TENNYSON.

The volume of Tennyson's poems containing "Oenone," "The Lotos Eaters," "A Dream of Fair Women," and "The Lady of Shalott," published in 1832, was brought to America by Ralph Waldo Emerson, who loaned it to many of his friends of Harvard College. James Russell Lowell was one of those who thus received his first knowledge of Tennyson from the hand of Emerson. The British poet had published his first poems in 1830.

In 1842 appeared the volume containing, "Morte d' Arthur," "Ulysses," and "Locksley Hall." This volume secured his fame. In 1847 he published "The Princess," and in 1850 "In Memoriam." Between 1850 and 1875, at intervals of about five years, he published his "Maud," "Idylls of the King," (the first four), "Enoch Arden," and "The Holy Grail," followed by other "Idylls." These were his major works. But he continued writing until the end of his long life. His "Crossing the Bar" was written when he was eighty-one years of age. It is one of the best known of his poems, and it is so beautiful, so sweet, and so characteristic of the poet in his best mood, that it is here given in full:

Sunset and evening star,  
And one clear call for me!  
And may there be no moaning of the bar,  
When I put out to sea;  
But such a tide as moving seems asleep,  
Too full of sound and foam,  
When that which drew from out the boundless deep  
Turns again home.  
Twilight and evening bell,  
And after that the dark!

And may there be no sadness of farewell  
When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place,  
The flood may bear me far,  
I hope to see my Pilot face to face  
When I have crossed the bar.

When Longfellow, the American poet, in 1859, read the first four "Idylls," he wrote to a friend: "The Idylls' are a great success. Rich tapestries, wrought as only Tennyson could have done them, and worthy to hang beside 'The Faerie Queen.' I believe there is no discordant voice on this side the water." Longfellow judged correctly. Tennyson's resemblance to Spenser has been remarked by others also. Taine, the Frenchman, noticed it. But he wrote in styles as varied as his subjects. As Taine remarks (English Lit., Vol. 4, p. 661): "He wrote in every accent, and delighted in entering into the feelings of all ages. He wrote of St. Agnes, St. Simon Stylites, Ulysses, Oenone, Sir Galahad, Lady Clare, Fatima, the Sleeping Beauty. He imitated alternately Homer and Chaucer, Theocritus and Spenser, the old English poets and the old Arabian poets. . . . He was like those musicians who use their bow in the service of all masters."

The exquisitely modulated harmony of his numbers and the smooth and equable movement of his verse are outstanding features of his metrical compositions. These capital traits are strikingly illustrated in the following verses from "The Princess":

The splendor falls on castle walls,  
And snowy summits old in story;  
The long light shakes across the lakes,  
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.  
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying;  
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.  
O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,  
And thinner, clearer, farther going!

O sweet and far from cliff and scar  
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!  
Blow, let us hear the purple gems replying,  
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,  
They faint on hill or field or river;  
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,  
And grow forever and forever.  
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying.  
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying dying.

Such artistry cannot be too highly praised. Another song from "The Princess" has become the best known lullaby in the English tongue:

Sweet and low, sweet and low,  
Wind of the western sea,  
Low, low, breathe and blow,  
Wind of the western sea!  
Over the rolling waters go,  
Come from the dying moon, and blow,  
Blow him again to me;  
While my little one while my pretty one sleeps.

We believe that it is in just such rare and dainty bits that Tennyson excels all the poets of his time. They are like miniature paintings by a master hand. The more they are studied the more they disclose, behind their vermeil veil of modesty, their great creator's power. They are like shrinking flowers whose beauty is first made known by the fragrance they exhale. The following is an unsurpassed example of Tennyson in his peculiar and all but exclusive field:

Break, break, break  
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!

And I would that my tongue could utter  
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,  
That he shouts with his sister at play!  
O well for the sailor lad,  
That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on  
To their haven under the hill;  
But O for the touch of a vanished hand  
And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break  
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!  
But the tender grace of a day that is dead  
Will never come back to me.

In Tennyson there is none of the wild, tempestuous force of Byron. He approximates the technical correctness of Pope, and the tender elegance of Wordsworth and Keats, whose intellectual heir he undoubtedly was. But, as remarked above, his style is not always the same. Sometimes he breaks forth in a far richer strain and his verses, flashing with color, gleam like a jewelled brocade zoned with silken gold, or a morning sky shot o'er with silver stars, empurpled by the streaks of dawn. Contemporary critics were a unit in his praise. Mr. McCarthy, in his "History of Our Own Times" declares: "Mr. Tennyson is beyond doubt the most complete of the poets of Queen Victoria's time. No one else has the same combination of melody, beauty and description, culture and intellectual power. He has sweetness and strength in exquisite combination." In Stedman's Victorian Poets, it is said that he is "Certainly to be regarded in time to come as, all in all, the fullest representative of the refined, speculative and complex Victorian age. . . . In technical excellence, as an artist in verse, Tennyson is the greatest of modern poets." He has usually been known as a poet of the intellect, rather than for his



mastery of the passions. Whipple, the American critic, in his *Essays and Reviews*, says: "His poetry is marked by intellectual intensity as distinguished from intensity of feeling." Bayard Taylor was undoubtedly correct in his judgment that "Tennyson's place in the literature of the English language, whatever may be his relation to the acknowledged masters of song, is sure to be high and permanent."

The life of Tennyson was as uneventful as that of Wordsworth. He was born in 1809 and died in 1892. He was the third child in a family of twelve. His father was a clergyman in Lincolnshire, and a man of unusual intelligence. The poet was entered as a student at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he attained, even in his youth, some eminence as a poet. But he left the university in 1831 without having taken a degree, and thenceforth devoted the remainder of his life to poetry. For over sixty years he toiled away at his art, and lived the life of a literary recluse. His first productions were rather inhospitably received by the critics. Literary history affords no more conspicuous example of excellence attained through great labor, and of persistent effort, rightly directed, culminating in the highest triumphs of genius.

As late as 1850 he was still in a state of relative obscurity. In that year died Wordsworth, the poet laureate. The honor was at once offered to Samuel Rogers, author of "The Pleasures of Memory," then in his eighty-ninth year. The venerable poet declined the honor, because of his age, but ventured to suggest Alfred Tennyson for the post. Lord Palmerston, the British premier, replied: "We know nothing of this gentleman." Twenty years after the publication of his first volume, eighteen years after the publication of his "Morte d'Arthur," "Ulysses," and "Locksley Hall," and three years after publishing "The Princess," and in the very year of his publication of "In Memoriam," the British government had never heard of Alfred Tennyson, the greatest of the "Victorians!" But he was nevertheless appointed, upon the suggestion of Rogers. Thirty-four years later, in 1884, he accepted a peerage and thus became the first member of the English House of Lords selected alone because of his literary

distinction. He had previously declined the honor twice; for Tennyson believed, and in the depths of his democratic heart he knew, the truth of these lines, which he had written in 1832:

“Howe’er it be, it seems to me,  
’Tis only noble to be good.  
Kind hearts are more than coronets  
And simple faith than Norman blood.”

Tennyson produced some of his best work in the treatment of topics of current interest. Among these poems may be mentioned his “Ode on the Duke of Wellington,” and his “Charge of the Light Brigade.” During the recent international crisis these prophetic lines from “Locksley Hall,” published in 1842, were recalled throughout the world:

For I dipped into the future as far as human eye could see,  
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonders that would be;  
Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails,  
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales;  
Heard the Heavens filled with shouting, and there rained a  
ghastly dew

From the nations’ airy navies grappling in the central blue;  
Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-wind rushing  
warm,

With the standards of the peoples plunging through the thunder-  
storm;

Till the war-drum throbbed no longer, and the battle-flags were  
furled

In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world.

There the common-sense of most shall hold a fretful realm in awe,  
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapped in universal law.

And so Alfred Tennyson moved through life, reticent, retiring, savoring more of the cloister than of the court, hermit-like,

uttering his soul-cries and his prophecies; like the voices of Dodona, always heard, but by the public never seen. As W. Howitt wrote, so long ago: "You may hear the voice, but where is the man? He is wandering in some dreamland beneath the shade of old and charmed forests, by far-off shores, where

‘All night

The plunging seas draw backward from the land

Their moon-led waters white;’

by the old mill-dam thinking of the merry miller and his pretty daughter; or is wandering over the open wolds, where

‘Norland whirlwinds blow.’

From all places—from the silent corridor of an ancient convent; from some shrine where a devoted knight recites his vows; from the drear monotony of the moated grange, or the ferny forest, beneath the talking oak,—comes the voice of Tennyson, rich, dreamy, passionate, yet not impatient; musical with the airs of chivalrous ages, yet mingling in his songs the theme and spirit of those that are yet to come."



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## TO MY BOOKS.

As one who, destined from his friends to part,  
    Regrets his loss, but hopes again er'while  
    To share their converse and enjoy their smile,  
And tempers, as he may, affliction's dart.

Thus, loved associates, chiefs of elder art,  
    Teachers of wisdom, who could once beguile  
    My tedious hours, and lighten every toil,  
I now resign you, nor with fainting heart.

For pass a few short years, or days, or hours,  
    And happier seasons may their dawn unfold,  
    And all your sacred fellowship restore;  
When freed from earth, unlimited its powers,  
    Mind shall with mind direct communion hold,  
And kindred spirits meet to part no more.

—*Roscoe.*

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